VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

JANUARY 2005 TWO DOLLARS

2005 Trout Guide

Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr

It was my pleasure recently to accompany the Chairman of the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries and two of our senior law enforcement officers on a visit to the country of Zimbabwe. This trip was privately financed and was arranged to provide us the opportunity to see first-hand the practices of wildlife management in Africa. Prior to this trip, we were aware that we live in a very global environment, both in terms of managing our wildlife resources and what we do in wildlife resource law enforcement. For example, when the black bear population crashes in Asia, we have seen what we believe is an increase in poaching in black bear in Virginia. So we knew that we needed to have a better understanding of how to manage this type of problem. After our return, we now have better insights and can more fully appreciate why it occurs.

One of the more noticeable things that we observed early in the trip is that Africa represents a very different model of wildlife management than what we are accustomed to in the United States. In their model individuals directly control animals that are on their property. In our country wildlife is owned by the public and managed for the public good.

While in Africa, we had the opportunity for extensive discussions with professional hunting guides and we presented them with our concerns and literally bombarded them with our questions. A professional hunter (PH) in Africa is a highly sought after position and requires years of an apprenticeship and a demonstration of a variety of skills. The skills of a PH are not just limited to hunting, but they also include wildlife identification, game management and knowledge about how to insure that individuals are not placed in dangerous situations or harms way when hunting African game. It quickly became apparent to me that the PH was not just a title or a name, but that it is a profession that is truly "professional" as the name implies.

Another issue that was very obvious to those of us on the trip is the role that government plays in managing wildlife. While Zimbabwe is not a country that has tremendous technology, we were quite impressed with how seriously it views its wildlife resources. The government officials there aggressively pursue poachers and actively encourage their landowners to do likewise. While their game officials are not equipped at all like ours, they obviously take their job very seriously.

As space will allow in future Director's columns I look forward to presenting more information on the differences between game management in counties like Africa and ours. I also plan for a part of that information to look at some of the similarities. A modern wildlife agency must be aware of issues beyond its individual state borders in order to protect its wildlife and be sound stewards of this wildlife resource that we have all come to treasure.

One last issue that I want to emphasize this month is the cultural variation that is becoming more represented in individual views and perspectives in activities such as hunting and fishing. We recently saw the news accounts of a very tragic incident in Wisconsin that had an absolutely devastating outcome. From the news reports, it appears that this incident may have started as the result of a lack of cultural understanding. As our state becomes more culturally diversified, we must insure that we are addressing many different views on wildlife, and especially the cultural differences. During 2004 our Department spent quite a bit of time and money dealing with a snakehead fish issue in the Potomac River.We now know that problems such as the intentional introduction of an invasive species, such as the snakehead fish, further underscore the importance of a broader-based cultural understanding. As we work on emerging wildlife issues, this is one of the most serious matters that we have to better understand and effectively address.

I sincerely hope that everyone's New Year is off to a great start and that 2005 will bring you many enjoyable outdoor experiences, both in the woods and on the waters of our great Commonwealth.

Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

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About the cover: "Brook Trout and Royal Coachman" is an original, colored pencil illustration by angling artist Tye Krueger. Tye lives in Richmond and specializes in realistic illustrations of fresh and saltwater game fish in direct profile or in their natural habitat. To view more of Tye Krueger's illustrations or to contact him, visit www.outdoorimpressions.com.
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Jewels in the

Reflections on Virginia

Photo essay by
King Montgomery

Trout are natural wonders and we are fortunate to have a bunch of them living in the Old Dominion. As I travel around, people always are amazed when I tell them we have rainbow, brown and native brook trout in many ponds, lakes, rivers and streams. Folks think we're only a catfish and bass state, which we are in a way, and I certainly like to fish for them. But we have trout too, and I'm glad. They are special, beautiful creatures that captured my affection years ago, and they live in some beautiful places.

"Roughly speaking, if you rub a mountain with cold, flowing water, you get a trout."

Christopher Camuto, 1998

Stream Trout Fishing

"What would make a fitting Valhalla for a good fisherman when he dies would be a regular river with plenty of rainbow trout in it jumping crazy for the fly."

Ernest Hemingway, 1920

"Every day on the water teaches me something. If that should ever change, I suspect my passion for fishing would diminish disturbingly."

William G. Tapply, 1997

"Catching and releasing wild trout is not just a sport or game, it is letting the cycle continue. Not trying to stop the wind and rain but letting it pass through."

Ailm Travler, 1991

2005 Trout G

by Larry Mohn
VDGIF Fisheries Regional Manager

Introduction

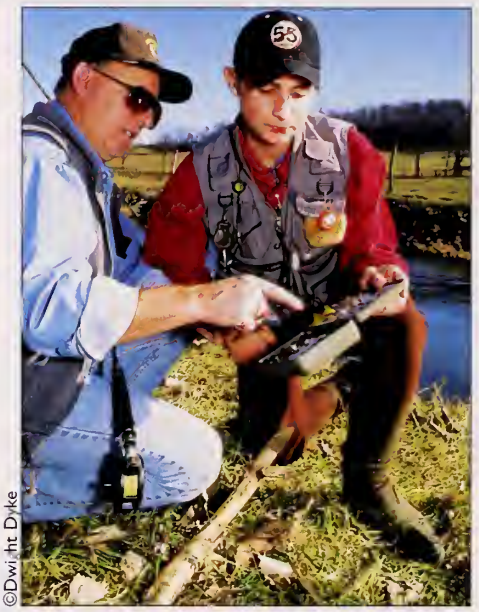
Virginia contains over 2,800 miles of trout streams, in addition to numerous ponds, small lakes and reservoirs. The total includes over 2,300 miles of wild trout streams and about 600 miles of water inhabited with stocked trout. Virginia's diversified trout habitat offers a wide range of trout fishing opportunities.

Virginia's warm climate and topography generally limit trout habitat to the western portion of the state. The Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains provide the elevation to maintain low water temperatures year-round, while the valleys between these ranges contain the unique limestone formations necessary to produce highly productive spring creeks.

Trout management in Virginia consists of three basic programs. The Catchable Trout Stocking Program is the best known and most popular. Such waters are stocked from October through May with catchable-sized trout. See the Trout Stocking Plan on pages 12–13 for the streams and lakes stocked and their stocking schedule.

The Wild Trout Program includes the management of reproducing populations of brook, rainbow and brown trout. Efforts are directed primarily at habitat preservation and proper regulation for protection of spawning stocks.

The Fingerling Trout Stocking Program involves stocking sublegal trout into waters that have cold summer water temperatures and a good food source. This is the smallest of the three programs, but includes many of our high quality, special regulation trout fishing waters.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Restrictions have been applied to certain wild trout waters, as well as several types of stocked trout streams, to provide anglers with the opportunity to catch more and larger trout throughout the fishing season. These special regulation areas include some of the state's best trout waters and are described in detail in this guide.

The trout season is open year-round in Virginia. Fishing success for both wild and stocked trout should be very high through the spring, fall and mild winter periods. From June through September, normally low stream flows and warming water temperatures make trout fishing more difficult. However, experienced trout anglers can find good trout fishing opportunities throughout the year.

All stocked, special regulation, and larger wild trout waters are featured on the five maps beginning on page 25 in this special issue.

New For 2005

There will be no changes in trout regulations going into effect for 2005. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) has changed its regulation cycle and instead of considering new fish regulations this past year, they will be reviewed and considered for 2006. The only changes to this year's program include the addition of several waters to the catchable trout stocking program and changes in the frequency of stocking for selected waters.

The following streams will be added to the stocking program. Two of these streams were added during the past year, but were not listed in last year's trout guide. New waters include Howells Creek (Floyd County), Swift Run (Greene County) and an additional portion of South River in Ridgeview Park within the City of Waynesboro. After losing several streams to the program last year, it is encouraging to see these additions.

In addition to adding the above waters, a number of waters were upgraded to a higher category, which increases the frequency of stocking on those waters. Both of the Mint Spring Ponds (Albemarle County),

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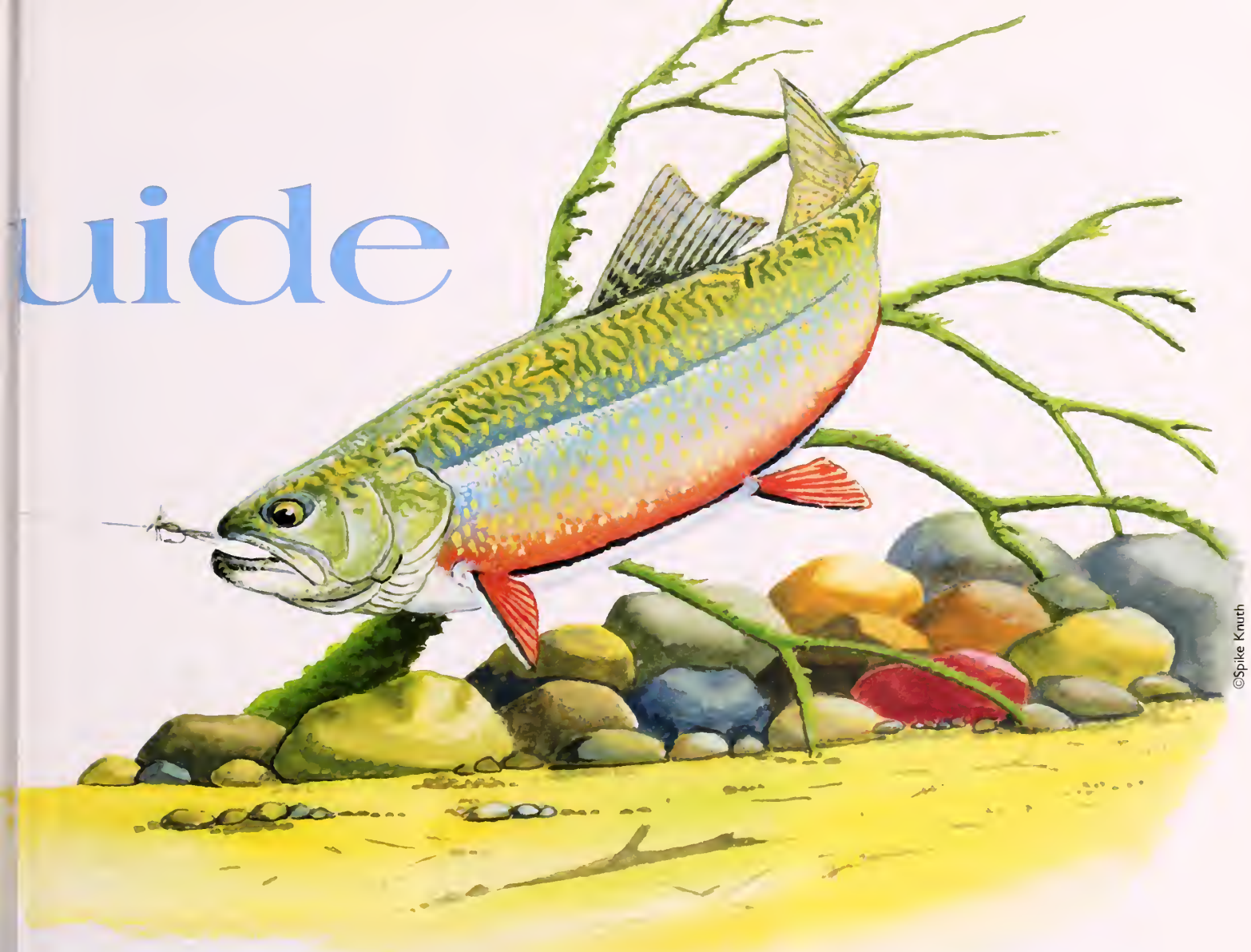

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and Hawksbill Creek (Page County), were increased from B to A waters. Stock Creek (Scott County), was increased from Category C to Category B.

Catchable Trout Stocking Program

As in most states, put-and-take trout fishing draws the most interest and attention in Virginia, probably because of the availability of catchable-sized trout and ease of capture. Virginia's catchable program is supported by hatcheries located at Marion, Paint Bank and Wytheville. Three additional rearing facilities are located at Marion, Montebello and Williamsville.

Trout eggs are collected from large brood stock in early fall and placed in incubator trays. This helps to maintain an even flow of well-oxygenated water through the eggs. Once the embryo is developed, trays must be constantly cleaned and dead eggs removed to control disease. After 25–30 days the trout begin to hatch. The small "fry," as they are called, remain attached to their egg sacs for about 14 days, and draw their food from it. The fry are kept indoors in small troughs until their sacs are absorbed and they begin taking small, pelleted food. When they reach a suitable fingerling stage (2–3 inches) they are transported to rearing facilities where they are placed in raceways.

The fish are fed several times daily for at least a year until they reach catchable size (9–11 inches). During this rearing period, it is necessary to clean raceways daily to control disease and occasionally grade fish to ensure that the larger trout will not eat smaller ones.

The program is covered primarily from the sale of trout licenses. In addition to a valid state freshwater fishing license, a trout license is required to legally fish in designated stocked trout waters. Annual output from the program is approximately 1,250,000 catchable trout, in addition to variable numbers of fingerling and subcatchable trout used in other programs.

By January 1, most streams on the stocking list will have already received at least one stocking and will continue to be stocked through spring. Stockings will be discontinued by the end of May and will resume after October 1. Streams and

lakes will be stocked at various intervals, depending on their potential to hold trout during the late spring and early fall. Fishermen should find that most streams have good numbers of trout throughout the stocking season.

Waters to be stocked are listed by county in the *Trout Stocking Plan* (see pages 12–13). The plan indicates the frequency of stocking and the specific stocking periods for each stream. Call your local VDGIF office for more information. For daily trout stocking updates during stocking season, call **1-434-525-FISH (3474)** or check our Web site at www.dgif.virginia.gov.

Stocked trout streams are marked with appropriate signs, which identify the portion of stream stocked. Marked sections are open to public fishing, in accordance with agreements between the Department and private landowners. This is the only case where anglers are not required to have landowner permission before fishing on private water.

Special Regulations

Fee Fishing Areas

The fee fishing areas offer put-and-take trout fishing with the added advantage that trout are stocked several times weekly throughout the season. The fee fishing program operates from the first Saturday in April through September at Clinch Mountain and Crooked Creek and from the first Saturday in April through June 15 and from September 15 through October 31 at Douthat. For those anglers who miss the opening day of trout season, the fee fishing areas still provide this opportunity on the first Saturday in April when they open at 9:00 a.m. During the fee fishing season, a daily permit is required in addition to a valid Virginia freshwater fishing license. After the fee fishing season, these areas revert to designated stocked trout waters and a trout license is required instead of the daily permit. The creel limit at these areas is six fish per day.

Clinch Mountain Fee Fishing Area

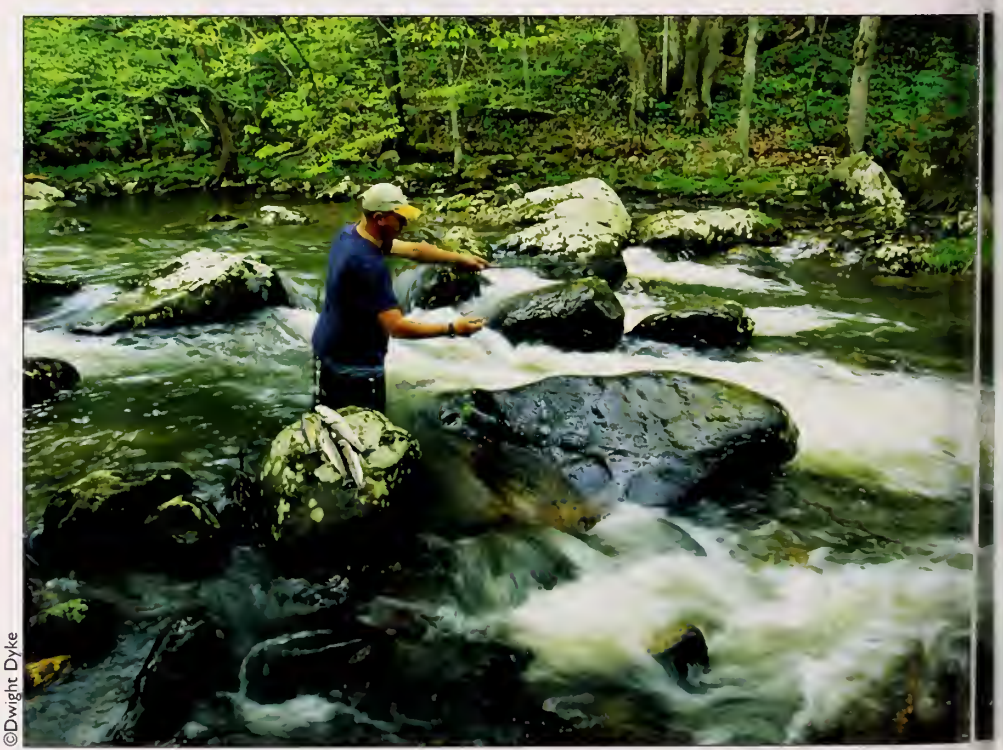
The Clinch Mountain Fee Fishing Area is located in southwest Virginia, about 7 miles west of Saltville. The area consists of approximately 7 miles of Big Tumbling Creek and its two major tributaries, Briar Cove Creek and Laurel Bed Creek. Big Tumbling Creek is a large, steep gradient stream with numerous small waterfalls and large, deep rocky pools. The two tributaries are much smaller with a more moderate gradient. Laurel Bed Lake is no longer part of the fee fishing program and does not require the daily permit. However, the lake continues to be managed for trout as well as for flow augmentation for Big Tumbling Creek. Trout are stocked daily (except Sunday) throughout the fee period in the streams, and fishing begins at 6 a.m. daily, except for opening day. Camping is available at the area and VDGIF owns and manages the surrounding land.

Crooked Creek Fee Fishing Area

Crooked Creek is located in Carroll County, 5 miles east of Galax. The area consists of 5 miles of stream, which is stocked. In addition, approximately 2 miles of the stream is managed as a wild trout fishery. Crooked Creek is a wide, fairly low gradient stream with a gravel bottom. The surrounding land is mixed fields and woodlots, not characteristic of the more common mountain stream drainages. Fishing must cease at 7 p.m. to allow for restocking. No camping facilities are available at Crooked Creek, but private facilities are available nearby.

Douthat Lake Fee Fishing Area

The Douthat Fee Fishing Area includes about 4 miles of Wilson Creek along with the stocking of 60-acre Douthat Lake. This fee fishing area has two features designed to encourage children to participate. A small "children-only" area has been established on Wilson Creek, just below the dam. In addition, children 12 years of age and under can fish with-



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out a permit throughout the fee-fishing area as long as they are accompanied by a permitted adult and their combined creel does not exceed that of the adult. The lake provides fishing for bass, bluegill, crappie, pickerel and catfish, in addition to trout, which are stocked twice weekly. During most summer months, conditions become unfavorable for trout stocking. Therefore, at Douthat, the fee fishing season runs from the first Saturday in April through June 15 and from September 15 through October 31. From June 16 through September 14, no trout will be stocked and no daily fee or trout license is required although trout fishing opportunities will remain for trout still present in the lake from previous stockings. The lake, stream and surrounding land are located within Douthat State Park and are administered by the Virginia Division of Parks and Recreation. Available recreation includes camping, hiking and swimming in addition to fishing. Cabins are also available for rent if application is made well in advance. The park is located in a beautiful mountain setting with most of the surrounding land within the George Washington National Forest.

Delayed Harvest Trout Streams

This program incorporates aspects of both catch-and-release and put-and-take trout fishing. Catchable-sized trout are stocked in the fall, winter and spring. From October 1 through the following May 31, only artificial lures may be used, and all fish must be returned unharmed. From June 1 through September 30 general trout regulations are in effect and trout may be creeled. A trout license is required to fish these waters from October 1 through June 15.

Accotink Creek (Fairfax County)

The delayed harvest section of Accotink Creek extends from Route 236 (Little River Turnpike) downstream 1.9 miles to Route 620 (Braddock Road). This stream section is bound by a Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) floodplain park that belies the stream's urban setting (the upper boundary is adjacent to the Capital Beltway). The stream contains numerous riffle-run-pool sequences with good holding pools, and it has an abundance of large woody debris. Primary access is via the FCPA Wakefield Park facility off Braddock Road.

©Michael Simon

Back Creek (Bath County)

The rugged mountains that form the backdrop to the Back Creek special regulation area are one of the area's most appealing features. The stream is about 25 feet in width with moderate gradient and excellent fly-fishing opportunities. The stream has been extensively reconstructed to improve trout habitat by Dominion Virginia Power, who constructed a pump storage facility just upstream. The land adjacent to this stream section is managed for recreation by Dominion Virginia Power. In addition to trout fishing, the area offers a campground, picnic pavilion, outdoor games and two warmwater lakes for fishing and swimming. Take Route 39 west from Warm Springs to Mountain Grove, then right on Route 600 for 6 miles.

Chestnut Creek (Carroll County)

Chestnut Creek was established as a delayed harvest water in 2001. The managed section begins at Route 793 north of Galax and extends downstream 2.3 miles to the confluence with the New River. The stream parallels the New River Trail State Park, which offers a unique hiking or biking opportunity to access the many rock ledges and large pools common in this reach of stream. Parking is limited, but available at the Route 793 bridge. In addition to the state park, many private landowners have made this program possible, and anglers should be sure to respect adjoining private property.

Hardware River (Fluvanna County)

Although located in Virginia's piedmont region, the rocky outcrops, cliffs and steep banks of Hardware River resemble a mountain stream. This aesthetically pleasing section of river, located within the Hardware River Wildlife Management Area (WMA), will likely become a favorite destination for trout anglers. The special regulation area covers a 2.6 mile section of the Hardware River from Muleshoe Bend downstream to the Route 646 bridge. From the west, the river and the Hardware River WMA is accessed by taking Route 6 east from Scottsville then turning right onto Route 611 to the Kidd's Mill Road parking area. To access the eastern portion of the WMA, continue east on Route 6 and turn right onto Route 646. Detailed maps and information on the Hardware River WMA can be obtained from any of the Department's offices or from the Department's Web site.

Holliday Creek (Appomattox/Buckingham Counties)

The Holliday Creek delayed harvest section is located completely within the Appomattox/Buckingham State Forest. The 2.8 mile sec-

tion stretches from just above Holliday Lake upstream to Route 640. The stream is approximately 15–25 feet in width and runs through a remote, heavily wooded section of forest that can be accessed by taking Route 24 north out of Appomattox to Route 626. Anglers should turn onto Routes 640 or 614 to access a series of foot trails to the stream that have been developed by the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF). Despite the fact that this stream is located in the piedmont of Virginia, anglers will be surprised by the quality of the fishing experience available.

Holmes Run (Fairfax County)

Holmes Run, below Lake Barcroft, boasts some amazing habitat for an urban stream. Much of this may be due to the lake's buffering of storm water and silt loads. Consequently, Holmes Run in the 1.2 mile stretch between the Barcroft Dam and the Alexandria line is more characteristic of a less impacted, natural stream. The stream valley is incised, and during months when the forest canopy is intact; urban sounds and sights are nearly eliminated. Anglers will find good fish cover in the form of bedrock, boulders and large woody debris. A fairly good trail follows (and sometimes crosses) the stream from the parking lot off Columbia Pike (Route 244).

North Fork of Pound River and Pound River (Wise County)

The delayed harvest section begins at the base of the North Fork of Pound Dam and extends downstream about 2 miles to the confluence of Indian Creek. Above Route 23, the North Fork of the Pound River is a medium-sized stream with shallow runs and riffles flowing through fields and woodlots. Downstream of Route 23 the river passes through the town of Pound, gaining size and flow, and taking on a more urban setting. Access is available at the North Fork of Pound Dam and at parking lots within the town of Pound. This stream provides high catch rates and good fishing opportunities from October through early summer.

North River (Augusta County)

The delayed harvest section of the North River extends from the base of Elkhorn Dam downstream 1.5 miles to the head of the Staunton City Reservoir. This is a remote section of stream that can only be reached by foot trail. Access is available by parking at Elkhorn Lake and following the trail along the lake to the spillway. This area provides a remote, scenic fishing opportunity during the winter and spring months. Stream flow in the North River is usually low during summer and fall, and the fall trout stocking is often delayed until adequate water flow is available.

Passage Creek (Warren County)

The delayed harvest section of Passage Creek extends from the Warren County line downstream approximately 1 mile through the Department's Front Royal Fish Hatchery. This section of stream is immediately downstream of the area that has historically been stocked under the put-and-take program. Parking is available on Forest Service lands adjacent to Route 678 or on Department lands adjacent to Route 613.

Pedlar River (Amherst County)

The Pedlar River delayed harvest section is 2.7 miles in length and is located below the Lynchburg City Reservoir in the George Washington National Forest, southeast of Buena Vista. Anglers should be prepared for a considerable walk to the stream in steep terrain. The stream contains abundant deep pool and run habitat during the winter, spring and early summer months, and it provides

great fly fishing opportunities. Water levels during the late summer and fall months can be low due to a lack of water leaving the reservoir. The U.S. Forest Service and the Department have cooperated in the development of three access sites to the river located along FS 39 off Route 607.

Roanoke River (Roanoke County and City of Salem)

There are two delayed harvest sections located on the Roanoke River near Roanoke. The first section is located within Green Hill Park in Roanoke County and was established in 2001. The newest section is located within the City of Salem and was established in 2003. The Green Hill Park section is easily found off Route 11/460 west of Salem and stretches from the Route 760 Bridge (Diguids Lane) upstream 1 mile to a sign posted at the upper end of the park. It is best to access the stream from the park side of the stream, and anglers are encouraged to use the parking areas provided. In addition to trout fishing, Green Hill Park offers picnic facilities and other recreational opportunities for family activities. The Salem section is located along Riverside Drive and stretches from the Colorado Street Bridge downstream approximately 2 miles to the Route 419 bridge. This section of delayed harvest water is most easily accessed from the Riverside Drive side of the river. Both of these sections are located in an urban setting and provide big stream fishing in a pleasant environment. The stream is approximately 50–75 feet in width and has ample riffle/run habitat for wade fishing, as well as pool habitat for anglers who prefer bank fishing.

South River (Augusta County)

The delayed harvest section extends from the Second Street bridge in Waynesboro upstream 2.4 miles to the base of Rife Loth Dam. This stream section runs through the city of Waynesboro and is in an urban setting. South River is a relatively large, wide stream with shallow runs and riffles. The stream provides outstanding fly-fishing opportunities because of its size and its abundance of aquatic insects. The stream is open to fishing year-round and provides excellent winter fishing.

Catchable Trout Stocking Plan

Several changes have occurred within the catchable trout program for 2005. The following waters will be added to the stocking program: Howells Creek (Floyd County), Swift Run (Greene County) and an additional portion of South River in Ridgeview Park in the City of Waynesboro.

A few changes have been made in stocked trout water categories. Both of the Mint Spring Ponds (Albemarle County), and Hawksbill Creek (Page County) were increased from B to A waters. Stock Creek (Scott County) was increased from Category C to Category B. This will mean an additional three stockings in those waters going to Category A, and an additional two stockings for Stock Creek.

Finally, a reminder about Trout Heritage Day. This program was added several years ago for those anglers who enjoyed and missed the old opening day. Selected waters are stocked for the first Saturday in April to create an announced stocking event. The Heritage Day waters for 2005 remain the same as last year and are listed on page 14. These streams and lakes are closed to fishing Friday, April 1st for stocking and will re-open to fishing at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday April 2nd.

Catchable Trout

These waters require a trout licens

ALBEMARLE COUNTY		
Mint Springs Lake (Upper)	A	
Mint Springs Lake (Middle)	A	
Moormans River (N. Fork)	B	(NSF)
Moormans River (S. Fork)	B	(NSF)
Sugar Hollow Reservoir	A	
ALLEGHANY COUNTY		
Clifton Forge Reservoir*	A	
Jerrys Run*	C	
Pounding Mill Creek*	B	
Smith Creek*	C	(NSF)
AMHERST COUNTY		
Davis Mill Creek*	C	
Little Irish Creek*	C	(NSF)
Pedlar River (Below dam)*	DH	
Pedlar River (Lower)*	A	
Pedlar River (Upper)*	B	**(H)**
Piney River (S. Fk. and Proper)*	B	(NSF)
Rocky Row Run*	C	
APPOMATTOX COUNTY		
Holliday Creek	DH	
AUGUSTA COUNTY		
Back Creek*	B	
Braley Pond*	A	
Elkhorn Lake*	A	
Falls Hollow*	C	(NSF)
Hearthstone Lake*	A	
Lower Sherando Lake*	A	
Mills Creek*	C	
North River (Natural Chimneys)	B	
North River (Gorge)*	B	
North River (Upper)*	B	(NSF)
North River (Tail)*	DH	
South River (Ridgeview Park)	A	
South River	DH	
Upper Sherando Lake*	A	
BATH COUNTY		
Back Creek	DH	
Back Creek*	B	
Bullpasture River	A	
Douthat Lake and Wilson Creek	+	
Jackson River Special Reg.*		
Jackson River (Hidden Valley)*	A	
Jackson River (Rt. 623)*	A	
Pads Creek*	C	
Spring Run	A	
BEDFORD COUNTY		
Liberty Lake	A	**(H)**
BLAND COUNTY		
Laurel Fork Creek	C	
Lick Creek	B	
Wolf Creek	A	
BOTETOURT COUNTY		
Jennings Creek*	A	**(H)**
McFalls Creek*	C	
Middle Creek*	B	
North Creek*	B	
Roaring Run*	B	

BUCHANAN COUNTY		
Dismal River	A	
Russell Fork River	C	
CARROLL COUNTY		
Chestnut Creek	DH	
Crooked Creek	A	**
Little Reed Island Creek	A	
Lovills Creek	C	
Stewarts Creek	B	(NSF)
CRAIG COUNTY		
Barbours Creek*	B	(NSF)
Potts Creek*	A	
DICKENSON COUNTY		
Cranesnest River	B	
Frying Pan Creek	C	
Pound River (Flannagan Dam)	A	
Russell Fork River (Haysi)	B	
Russell Fork River (Bartlick)	A	
FAIRFAX COUNTY		
Accotink Creek	DH	
Holmes Run	DH	
FAUQUIER COUNTY		
Thompson WMA Pond	A	
FLOYD COUNTY		
Burkes Fork	A	
Goose Creek	C	
Howells Creek	B	(NSF)
Laurel Fork	B	
Little Indian Creek	B	(NSF)
Little River	A	
Mira Fork	C	(NSF)
Rush Fork	C	(NSF)
West Fork Little River	B	(NSF)
FLUVANNA COUNTY		
Hardware River	DH	
FRANKLIN COUNTY		
Runnett Bag Creek	B	
Pigg River	A	
FREDERICK COUNTY		
Clearbrook Lake	A	
Hogue Creek	B	
Paddy Run*	B	
Winchester Lake	A	
GILES COUNTY		
Big Stoney Creek*	A	
Dismal Creek*	B	(NSF)
GRAYSON COUNTY		
Big Wilson Creek	A	
Elk Creek	A	
Fox Creek*	B	
Hales Lake*	A	
Helton Creek	B	
Middle Fox Creek	B	
GREENE COUNTY		
South River	B	
Swift Run	C	

HENRY COUNTY		
Smith River (Dam)		
Smith River (Lower)		
HIGHLAND COUNTY		
Bullpasture River		
S. Br. Potomac River		
LEE COUNTY		
Martins Creek		
North Fork Powell River		
MADISON COUNTY		
Hughes River		
Robinson River		
Rose River		
MONTGOMERY COUNTY		
Craig Creek*		
Pandapas Pond*		
Poverty Creek*		
Toms Creek		
NELSON COUNTY		
South Rockfish River		
Tye River		
PAGE COUNTY		
Cub Run*		
Hawksbill Creek		
Upper Passage Creek*		
PATRICK COUNTY		
Ararat River		
Clarks Creek		
Dan River (Above Talbott)		
Dan River (Below Powerhous		
Poorhouse Creek		
Rockcastle Creek		
Round Meadow Creek		
South Mayo River (North Fork		
South Mayo River (South Fork		
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY		
Quantico MCB		
PULASKI COUNTY		
Peak Creek		
ROANOKE COUNTY		
Glade Creek		
Roanoke River (City)		
Roanoke River (Green Hill Pa		
Roanoke River (Salem)		
Roanoke River (Salem)		
Tinker Creek		
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY		
Irish Creek*		
Maury River		
Mill Creek*		
South River		
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY		
Briery Branch Lake*		
Dry River		
German River		
Hone Quarry Lake*		

Stocking Plan

between October 1 and June 15

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		Hone Quarry Run*	C	
B		North Fork Shenandoah River	B	
A		Silver Lake	B	
		Slate Lick Lake*	B	
A		Slate Lick Run*	B	
B		South River (Grottoes)	A	
		RUSSELL COUNTY		
A		Big Cedar Creek	A	
A		**SCOTT COUNTY**		
		Bark Camp Lake*	A	**(H)**
A		Big Stony Creek	B	
A		Little Stony Creek*	B	
A	**(H)**	Stock Creek	B	
		Straight Fork (Lower)	C	
B		**SHENANDOAH COUNTY**		
A		Mill Creek	B	
C		Passage Creek*	A	**(H)**
B		Peters Mill Creek*	C	
		Stony Creek	A	
C	(NSF)	Tomahawk Pond*	B	
A		**SMYTH COUNTY**		
		Comers Creek*	C	
		Cressy Creek*	C	
B		Dickey Creek*	C	
A		Hurricane Creek*	C	
C		Middle Fork Holston River (Marion)	A	**(H)**
B		Middle Fork Holston River (Upper)	B	
B	(NSF)	South Fork Holston River (Buller Dam)*	A	
A		South Fork Holston River (Lower)	A	
C	(NSF)	Staley Creek	A	
B				
C		**STAUNTON CITY**		
C		Lake Tams	B	
		TAZEWELL COUNTY		
B	(NSF)	Lake Witten	A	**(H)**
		Laurel Creek*	C	
B		Lincolnshire Lake	A	**(H)**
		Little Tumbling Creek	B	
A		**WARREN COUNTY**		
A		Happy Creek	B	
DH		Passage Creek	DH	
A				
DH		**WASHINGTON COUNTY**		
A	**(H)**	Beartree Lake*	A	**(H)**
		Big Brumley Creek	C	
		Big Tumbling Creek	A	**
B		Straight Branch*	C	
A		Tennessee Laurel	A	
A		Valley Creek	C	
B		Whitetop Laurel (Lower)*	A	
		Whitetop Laurel (Upper)*	A	
A		**WISE COUNTY**		
B	(NSF)	Clear Creek*	C	
C		Middle Fork Powell River	B	
A		Pound River/N.Fk. Pound River	DH	

WYTHE COUNTY

Cripple Creek (Ravens)	A	**(H)**
Gullion Fork Ponds*	B	
Rural Retreat Lake Pond	A	
Stoney Creek*	C	
West Fork Reed Creek*	C	

Category A, stocked in each of the following periods: October (once), November or December (once), January or February; (once), March (twice), April (twice), and May (once).

Category B, stocked in each of the following periods: November or December (once), January or February (once), March (once), and April-May 15 (twice).

Category C, stocked three times between October and April 30.

* National Forest Waters

\+ Douthat stocked as Category A, Wilson as Category B put-and-take water after fee fishing season

DH Delayed Harvest Water-Special Regulations apply, please refer to article on Delayed Harvest, this issue.

(NSF) These waters **do not** receive fall & early winter stockings

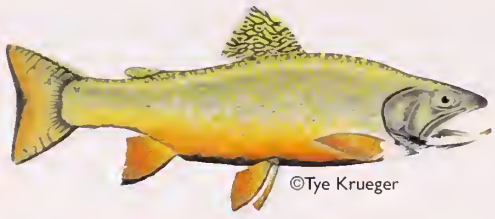
** A section of these waters is reserved for a fee fishing area

(H) These waters will receive a stocking for the "Heritage Day" program. Heritage Day is April 2. For details see the section explaining Heritage Day in this magazine.

Stocking information for put-and-take stocking can be obtained by calling **1-434-525-FISH (525-3474)**. The recording is updated after 4:00 p.m. each day fish are stocked. Or go to our Web site at **www.dgif-virginia.gov.**

Trout Species of Virginia

Trout belong to the salmon family (Salmonidae), which are native only to the northern hemisphere. Salmonidae includes trout, salmon, char, whitefish and grayling.



Brook Trout (Salvelinus fontinalis)

Coloration: The brook trout is Virginia's most colorful trout species. Its back is dark olive green with light, wormy lines. Its sides have light spots on a dark background and red spots surrounded by a bluish halo. Often the entire side has a bluish tint. Its belly area is generally white with intense orange-red streaking during spawning season. Lower fins are distinctively marked with an outer white edge, black line, and reddish coloration.

Distribution: The brook trout is endemic to eastern North America, meaning that originally it occurred in no other region. Initial distribution included the Atlantic seaboard south to Cape Cod, the Appalachians south to Georgia, then extending west through the Great Lakes to Minnesota and north to Hudson Bay. Due to its popularity as a gamefish, however, it has been introduced into many other regions and is now found in much of the western United States, Europe, South America, New Zealand and Asia. No other species of trout occurred in Virginia prior to man's stocking activities.

Biology: Brook trout spawn in October and November in Virginia. Spawning takes place in small streams, usually near the tail of a pool. Brook trout generally move upstream to spawn, often into the smaller headwater tributaries. In Virginia, an average female lays approximately 100 eggs in a clean gravel bed. Eggs hatch two to three months after they are spawned, and fry emerge from the gravel the following March.

Brook trout in Virginia reach sexual maturity at two years of age and an average length of 6.5 inches. The life span of this species is generally less than four years in this region, with most fish reaching about 9 to 12 inches by this time. Brook trout to 18 inches have been collected in Virginia, and some streams contain occasional trout of 12–16 inches. However, very few fish in a population can be expected to reach this size, even with restricted fishing.

The diet of brook trout consists of almost anything in the stream. Although their preferred foods consist of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates, minnows, salamanders and frogs are also taken. In most cases, available food is a limiting factor in the unproductive mountain streams common to Virginia. Therefore, fish must be non-selective and opportunistic to compete. State Record: 5 lb. 10 oz., Big Stony Creek, Shenandoah County.

Rainbow Trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss)

Coloration: This fish has an olive-green back often with a silvery cast grading to a silvery white underside. The dominant characteristic is the pink band extending from the cheek to near the tail. Rainbows are generally well spotted with black spots intensifying on the upper fins and tail.

Trout Heritage Waters for 2005

The following waters will be stocked for Heritage Day on April 2.

Beartree Lake	Washington County
Bark Camp Lake	Scott County
Clinch Mountain Fee Fishing Area*	Washington County
Cripple Creek (Ravens Cliff)	Wythe County
Crooked Creek Fee Fishing Area*	Carroll County
Douthat Lake Fee Fishing Area*	Bath County
Jennings Creek	Botetourt County
Lake Witten	Tazewell County
Liberty Lake	Bedford County
Lincolnshire Lake	Tazewell County
Middle Fork Holston River	Smyth County
Passage Creek	Shenandoah County
Pedlar River (upper)	Amherst County
Pigg River	Franklin County
Rose River	Madison County
Tinker Creek	Roanoke County

* The fee fishing areas are closed to angling from March 28–April 1. Heritage Waters are closed on April 1. On April 2 fishing can begin at 9:00 a.m.

The anal fin is often tipped with white in streambed fish.

Distribution: Rainbow trout are native to the Pacific Coast from Alaska to northern Mexico eastward to the continental divide. The steelhead is the same species, differing only in its need to migrate to and from the ocean. Rainbows have been widely distributed and now occur throughout the continental United States, Hawaii, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South America, Africa, Japan, Asia, and Europe.

In Virginia, the species is well established in the southwestern region of the state and is the dominant trout in the Mt. Rogers Area. North of Roanoke, distribution is limited, with most rainbow populations occurring in spring creeks. Although rainbow trout have displaced the brook trout over much of its range in the southeastern United States, most of the remaining brook trout habitat in Virginia does not appear suitable for the rainbow.

Biology: Life history of various rainbow trout populations can differ significantly. Certain strains will migrate from a lake or ocean into streams to spawn, while others may remain in the same stream throughout their life. Also, the time of spawning can vary greatly between populations. Certain behavioral and physiological differences are genetic, providing fish managers with additional management tools.

Lee Walker

In Virginia, most wild rainbow trout populations are strictly stream residents. Spawning occurs in gravel beds similar to those used by brook trout. The major difference is that rainbow trout are generally spring spawners, laying eggs in March. Hatchery managers have altered this natural spawning time, however, to create fall spawners for hatchery purposes. This fall spawning characteristic is apparently retained by some of Virginia's wild rainbow trout populations. Rainbow trout also have greater reproductive potential than brooks, with females laying 800 to 1000 eggs, depending on the size of the fish. This higher reproductive capacity is probably the reason over exploitation is less of a problem than it is with brook trout.

The diet of rainbows is quite similar to that of brook trout. Larger rainbows often show a greater preference for minnows than do brookies, but the main diet still consists of invertebrates. Rainbows are somewhat more selective than brook trout and, therefore, slightly more difficult to catch.

Rainbows have the potential to attain a much greater size than brook trout, but in Virginia's mountain streams they exhibit similar growth and age structure. In spring creeks and large reservoirs, however, rainbow trout over 5 pounds are not uncommon. State Record: 14 lb. 7 oz., Greer Trout Pond, Grayson County.

Brown Trout (Salmo trutta)

Coloration: The dorsal area of this fish is usually brown, giving way to silvery sides and a yellowish underbelly. Pronounced black spots, often

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surrounded by a lighter halo, are spread along much of its body, extending well below the lateral line. In addition, irregularly shaped red or orange spots are also present along its sides. Some dark spots occur on the dorsal, adipose and tail fin, but such coloration is not as concentrated as on rainbows. The adipose fin is usually an orange/red color.

Distribution: Brown trout are native only to Europe and western Asia. They have been widely introduced elsewhere and are now found throughout the United States, southern Canada and the Rocky Mountains, as well as in South America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

In Virginia, the brown trout distribution is limited, with most wild populations occurring in the Carroll, Floyd and Patrick county areas. Small scattered populations also occur in the lower portion of many larger, wild brook trout streams throughout the state.

Biology: Brown and brook trout require similar spawning habitats, often utilizing the same sites in streams containing both species. Brown trout spawn later than brook trout, generally in November and December in Virginia. They have a higher reproductive potential than the other two species, mainly because of their larger size.

Brown trout reach sexual maturity at two to three years of age. The life expectancy of this species is longer than that of the other two trout. Although life spans of 10–15 years have been reported, brown trout in Virginia usually do not exceed four to five years of age. The longer life span naturally increases

the potential size of the brown despite annual growth rates similar to brook trout. Small mountain streams that rarely have brook trout over 12 inches will occasionally produce brown trout over 20 inches.

Brown trout are highly carnivorous, maintaining a diet of insects, crustaceans, mollusks, salamanders, frogs, rodents and fish. Fish and crayfish are the predominant diet of browns over 12 inches while smaller trout generally stick to invertebrates. Larger browns have a tendency to feed at dusk and after dark, making the larger fish difficult to catch. State Record: 14 lb. 12 oz., South Fork Holston River.

Wild Trout Program

Wild trout populations require cold, well-oxygenated water, a clean stream bottom and good fish cover. In Virginia, most trout habitat losses occur through increased stream temperature, siltation and stream channel alteration.

Water temperature requirements may be the most critical factor facing Virginia's trout populations, and the state's generally warm climate and normally low summer stream flows do not help the situation. Most shaded mountain streams do not exceed 70°F during the summer, which is suitable for trout. Aquatic habitat and suitable water temperature can be maintained even during logging and farming operations when streamside vegetation is left intact. In most cases, maximum stream temperatures in the low 70s are within the tolerable range for trout, but such temperatures improve the habitat for other stream fishes which trout cannot compete against.

Siltation and other more direct forms of habitat alteration, such as channelization, have also cost Virginia many miles of trout water. Silted stream bottoms decrease the stream's insect population, an important source of trout food. Siltation also makes trout reproduction difficult. Trout lay eggs in stream gravel, and clean gravel is necessary to insure movement of oxygenated water over the eggs. As little as a quarter-inch of silt over trout eggs can result in 100 percent mortality.

Alteration of stream channels is also of critical concern, not only due to the increased siltation it causes, but also due to the removal of fish cover and the potential to raise water temperatures. Trout require overhead cover, such as undercut banks, large rocks or submerged logs. When such cover is removed, the trout leave. Lack of suitable cover limits the number of large trout a stream can support.

Virginia lost many good wild trout populations prior to the mid-1970s due to habitat degradation. However, many of the land-use practices that resulted in those losses—widespread stream channelization, poor logging techniques, removal of streamside vegetation, intensive agriculture in riparian areas, etc.—have been improved to the point where, over the past few decades, the physical habitat has been improving. In addition, the Department maintains a current inventory of wild trout streams that provides the data necessary to protect this critical habitat.

The Department's trout stream inventory identifies over 2,300 miles of wild trout streams in Virginia. Biologists are encouraged to find that brook trout, the only trout species native to Virginia, still accounts for 80 percent of the wild trout resource in the state. Rainbow trout, a western introduction, have taken over many of the native brook trout streams in the other southeastern states. As a result, Virginia currently has more native brook trout streams than all other southeastern states combined.

Growth rates of wild trout, particularly brook trout, in Virginia are exceptional when compared with growth rates for similar streams in neighboring states. In most Virginia streams, adult brook trout average 8–10 inches by their third year of age. In respect to the number of streams available and the size of trout present, Virginia probably offers the best native brook trout fishing south of New England.

Unlike warmwater fish, such as bass and bluegill, trout have a very low ability to reproduce. Therefore, in heavily fished areas, it is imperative to protect trout until they are able to spawn at least once. In order to accomplish this objective, a 7-inch minimum size limit has been imposed on all trout creeled in Virginia. Such a limit will allow most wild trout to reach spawning age before they are subject to harvest.

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Special Regulation Wild Trout Streams

In the following streams regulations require the use of single hook, artificial lures, and all trout less than 9 inches in length be returned to the water unharmed. The exceptions are: the Rapidan River and its tributaries; Stewart's Creek; North Fork

Moorman River; Dan River; East Fork of Chestnut Creek; Roaring Fork; North Creek, and South Fork Holston River, which require the release of all fish caught, and Whitetop Laurel/Green Cove Creeks, which have a 12-inch minimum size limit.

Buffalo River (Amherst County)

Special regulations apply to that portion of North Fork of Buffalo River and its tributaries within the George Washington National Forest. Access is available by forest trail off Forest Road 51 or from the end of State Route 635. Buffalo River is a moderate to high gradient stream dominated by large boulders and deep pools. The stream contains a good, native brook trout population with numerous fish 8–10 inches in length.

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Big and Little Wilson Creeks (Grayson County)

The special regulation sections of Big Wilson and Little Wilson Creeks and their tributaries, Quebec Branch, Wilburn Branch and Mill Creek, include all portions of each stream within the boundaries of Grayson Highlands State Park and the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Big and Little Wilson Creeks provide an opportunity to fish for both wild rainbow and brook trout. Brook trout are primarily restricted to the headwaters of both streams and their tributaries. Rainbow trout can be found throughout the area. Big Wilson Creek offers some spectacular scenery. Large boulders predominate the stream channel, interspersed with deep pools associated with a steep gradient. Access can be gained through Grayson Highlands State Park or Route 806 and 817 off U.S. Route 58. Be prepared to do some hiking to fish this area.

Conway River/Devils Ditch (Greene County)

Special regulations apply to that portion of Conway River and its major tributary, Devils Ditch, within the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area and the Shenandoah National Park. The stream contains brook trout in the upper reaches with wild brown trout scattered through the lower portions. Adult brook trout range from 7–11 inches in length; brown trout occasionally exceed 20 inches. The stream lies north of Stanardsville and can be reached by Route 615 from Graves Mill.

Dan River (Patrick County)

The section of the Dan River in Patrick County from the Pinnacles Powerhouse upstream to Townes Dam is designated as a catch-and-release trout fishery. Wild brown trout are the dominant species in this stretch, although the occasional brook or rainbow trout may be caught. This is a moderate sized river with a steep gradient and many large, deep pools. The numbers of brown trout present are relatively low (a rough guide would be 2–4 fish/pool), but the size of the fish is above average (fish up to 16 inches are not uncommon).

This portion of the river can be reached by taking Route 8 south from Stuart to Route 103 west, turn right on Route 648 at Claudeville and proceed to the powerhouse at the end of the road. The upper end of this section can be reached by taking Route 614 south from Meadows of Dan, turning left on Route 602, and proceeding to Townes Dam. A permit from the City of Danville is required to access the special regulation section, and it can be obtained at no charge from the Pinnacles Powerhouse or from the City Utilities Department. Contact: City of Danville, Director of Electric Division, Department of Utilities, P.O. Box 3300, Danville, VA 24543. Phone 434/799-5270.

East Fork of Chestnut Creek (Grayson and Carroll Counties)

The East Fork of Chestnut Creek, locally known as Farmer's Creek, is designated a catch-and-release trout

fishery. The special regulation section includes all portions of the creek upstream of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The lower mile of the special regulation area is a low gradient, native brook trout stream with numerous deep pools and undercut banks. The stream decreases in size and increases in gradient upstream, and it is characterized by numerous small plunge pools and a dense rhododendron canopy. Adult brook trout average 8–13 inches in length with occasional larger fish in the lower reaches. The stream lies south of Galax, crossing the Blue Ridge Parkway a short distance east of Route 89.

Little Stony Creek (Giles County)

Special regulations apply to that portion of Little Stony Creek in the Jefferson National Forest. Most of the special section is below the Cascades waterfall. The upper reaches of Little Stony Creek contain native brook trout, but rainbow trout comprise most of the trout population below the Cascades. Adult rainbows average 7–12 inches in length. The area is heavily used by hikers and picnickers. The stream is located near Pembroke and can be reached by Route 623.

Little Stony Creek (Shenandoah County)

Little Stony Creek is a small mountain brook trout stream. The special regulations apply to that portion of stream located within the George Washington National Forest, including Woodstock Reservoir. Adult brook trout presently average 7–10 inches in length. The stream is located west of Woodstock and the Forest Service Road 92 crosses the lower portion of the special regulation section. Much of the upper reaches can only be reached by foot trail.

North Creek (Botetourt County)

The upper section of the stream (upstream of the North Creek campground) was designated a catch-and-release trout stream in 1999. Rainbow trout predominate, although brook trout are present as well. Adult trout will range from 7–12 inches. The stream is located east of Buchanan, a short distance from I-81. The Jefferson National Forest maintains a campground adjacent to the stream and vehicular access is available along most of its length.

North Fork Moormans River (Albemarle County)

That portion of the Moormans River lying within the Shenandoah National Park is designated as catch-and-release. The stream has historically contained an excellent population of brook trout with numerous adults of 8–12 inches. In addition, a small population of wild brown trout can be found in the lower half of the stream. However, this drainage was struck with devastating floods during June, 1995. The stream suffered significant habitat damage and resident trout populations have been severely reduced. Brook trout populations have been slow to recover in the lower reaches. Access to the Moormans River is available over State Route 614 past Sugar Hollow Reservoir, but much of the streamside trail no longer exists.

Ramsey's Draft (Augusta County)

Ramsey's Draft and its tributaries within the George Washington National Forest provide over 10 miles of native brook trout water. Most of this section of the stream is located within the Ramsey's Draft Wilderness Area, providing the angler with the opportunity to fish for quality native trout in a remote setting. Summer flows are usually quite low in this stream, so plan to fish Ramsey's Draft during the springtime. To reach Ramsey's Draft, drive 15 miles west of Churchville on Route 250 and look for the Mountain Home Picnic Area on the right. A foot trail parallels the stream from the picnic area.

Rapidan River (Madison County)

The Rapidan River is Virginia's best known trout stream. Not only was it the state's first special regulation stream, it was also the site of the Presidential Retreat established by President Hoover. Much of the original Camp Hoover is still intact and is occasionally used. The special regulation area of the Rapidan includes all the stream and its tributaries within the Shenandoah National Park and the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area. The stream contains an excellent native brook trout population with good numbers of 10–11 inch adults.

This stream drainage was hit by devastating floods in June, 1995 and September, 1996. Stream habitat was severely impacted along the lower reaches and in one tributary, the Staunton River. Impacted brook trout populations have rebounded very well in the Rapidan and, despite the significant loss of habitat in the Staunton River, populations in

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that stream are showing remarkable recovery. Access to the Rapidan is available over Route 662 from Graves Mill and over Route 649 from Criglersville.

Roaring Fork (Tazewell County)

This special regulation area is located within the boundaries of the Beartown Wilderness Area of the Jefferson National Forest. Acidification of this stream, resulting in a steadily declining brook trout population, prompted the inclusion of this stream section into Virginia's catch-and-release trout regulations. Access to the special regulated section is difficult and some hiking will be required. Access can be gained from Forest Service Road 222 off Route 16, south of Tazewell.

St. Mary's River (Augusta County)

The special regulation section includes all portions of the St. Mary's River above the gate at the National Forest boundary. It is a fairly high gradient stream with a number of waterfalls. Although water levels can get quite low along lower reaches, flows are much improved upstream and large, deep pools provide ample trout cover. Adult brook trout average 8–12 inches in length. Historically, the St. Mary's was well-known for its wild rainbow trout fishery, but stream acidification completely eliminated the wild rainbow trout fishery and seriously impacted native brook trout reproduction. In the spring of 1999, the U.S. Forest Service, in cooperation with the Department and other private organizations, limed the St. Mary's River to improve water quality. This effort has proven to be very successful. The brook trout population in St. Mary's River is now higher than it was in the 1970s. The stream lies east of Raphine off Route 608, a short distance from I-81. Most of the area is accessible by foot trail only and backpacking is popular.

South Fork Holston River (Smyth County)

This section of the South Fork Holston River lies within the boundaries of VDGIF's Buller Fish Hatchery. From the concrete dam downstream to the lower boundary of the hatchery property, only artificial lures with single hooks may be used and all trout caught must be released. This special regulation section of stream provides an excellent opportunity to catch trout of trophy size. Access can be gained through the Buller Fish Hatchery property off Route 650, south of Marion.

Stewart's Creek (Carroll County)

Stewart's Creek is a high-gradient, native brook trout stream with numerous plunge pools, rock ledges and a dense rhododendron canopy for cover. Approximately 4.5 miles of Stewart's Creek and its two major tributaries, North Fork and South Fork Stewart's Creek, were opened to the public in 1989 for year-round fishing as part of the Stewarts Creek Wildlife Management Area.

Stewart's Creek WMA is southeast of Galax on the east side of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Take Exit 1 off I-77. Follow the trailblazer signs to the area.

Whitetop Laurel/Green Cove Creeks (Washington County)

The special regulation area includes two sections. Prior to 1999, the lower mile of Green Cove Creek plus Whitetop Laurel Creek (to the first bridge above the village of Taylors Valley) made up the special regulation area. In 1999, an additional section (that extends from the Forest Service boundary below Taylors Valley, 2 miles downstream to the mouth of Straight Creek) was added. There remains a section of catchable, trout stocked water without special regulations through the village of Taylors Valley. Whitetop Laurel is one of Virginia's largest and most beautiful wild trout

streams. Wild rainbow trout dominate, with most adults in the 7–14 inch class. A few wild brown trout provide occasional trophy fish. The special regulation area is located east of Damascus (near the Tennessee line) and lies within the Mount Rogers Recreation Area. Minimum size limit in this section is 12 inches.

Shenandoah National Park (SNP)

The Park provides an entire region of special regulation trout streams, extending from Front Royal to Waynesboro. Park regulations were modified in 1996 and most streams are now open to fishing. However, only a portion of those streams open to angling allow for the harvesting of trout. Check with SNP for their annual list of streams where harvesting is permitted. All fishing in the park is restricted to the use of single hook artificial lures. In streams allowing harvest the creel limit is six trout per day, all of which must be 9 inches or more in length. Most streams within the park contain good populations of native brook trout, while a few of the larger east slope streams also contain isolated populations of brown trout.

Fingerling Stocking Program

The fingerling stocking program is the smallest of the state's three management programs. It is designed to take advantage of the natural potential of high-elevation lakes, deep reservoirs, cold-water tailwaters, and spring-fed streams to produce quality trout fishing opportunities where wild fisheries are not possible due to the lack of natural reproduction.

Because summer water temperatures are usually a limiting factor to trout survival in Virginia, under this program a stream or lake must provide suitable, year-round water temperatures for trout survival, have good habitat and be productive enough to provide adequate food for good growth.

Suitable trout waters are stocked once annually with fingerling or subcatchable (smaller than the legal size limit) trout, and often length limits and angling gear restrictions are imposed to protect these small fish until they reach harvestable size. In areas receiving heavy fishing pressure, special gear restrictions are often necessary to avoid high hooking mortality rates that can occur when bait fishing is permitted. These fish will often be caught several times before they eventually reach harvestable size, and the program can only be successful if hooking mortality remains low.

Depending on the length limit, these stocked fish will not reach a legal size for six months to two years. During this time, trout lose most of their hatchery characteristics, both in appearance and behavior, and create a fishery that approaches a wild one in terms of fishing experience.

Some of Virginia's most exciting trout fishing opportunities can be found within our fingerling stocking program, and by stocking small fish once a year, a high quality fishery can be developed at a fraction of the cost of the more common put and take program. Many anglers have discovered this quality angling and participation in the program is growing. The Department recognizes this growing interest and is continuing to develop new waters in the state.

Trout Lakes

The warm summer climate of Virginia limits the potential for development of good trout populations in lakes. Numerous small ponds and lakes are stocked under the catchable stocking program (see Trout Stocking Plan), however, very few provide good, year-round trout habitat for management of wild or put-and-grow trout fisheries. In order to provide adequate coldwater habitat in Virginia, a lake must either be located at high elevations where cool summer temperatures prevail, or be deep enough to maintain a cold layer of water. Virginia has five small lakes at sufficient elevation for trout and one reservoir deep enough to provide a two-story fishery. Two-story reservoirs stratify during summer months, providing an upper, warmwater layer where fish, such as bass, bluegill, crappie and catfish exist and a deep, coldwater layer suitable for trout.

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Laurel Bed Lake (Russell County)

Laurel Bed Lake is a 330-acre, mountaintop impoundment located approximately 10 miles northwest of Saltville. The lake is located in the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area and, in addition to providing a unique fishery, is used to augment the flow to Big Tumbling Creek during summer months. Until 1999 Laurel Bed Lake was part of the fee fishing area, but the lake no longer requires a daily permit or a trout license. The fishery is based on stocking sub-catchable brook trout in the fall. Fishing is usually excellent through June, with limits of trout being common. The favored fishing methods include nightcrawlers, mealworms, flies, and spinners. Fishing usually becomes sporadic as the lake temperature increases, with fish hitting well for a few days, then slacking off for several days. Favorite summer fishing spots are located around coves where spring branches enter. Late summer and early fall fishing is dependent on the number of fish that survive through the summer, and this changes significantly from year to year. Limited camping is permitted on the management area and a concession is in operation.

Lexington City Reservoir (Rockbridge County)

The Lexington City Reservoir is a 22-acre, high elevation lake located in Rockbridge County. It is a put-and-grow lake that is stocked annually with brook trout. The brookies have done well in the reservoir and many measure 9–13 inches in length.

It is a long hike across USFS lands to the reservoir and primitive camping is permitted. General fishing regulations are in effect, and no trout stamp is required. However, a $1.00 daily use permit or a $15.00 seasonal pass (good from July 1-June 30) is required from Lexington City Hall, (540) 462-3702.

Mills Creek and Coles Run Reservoirs (Augusta County)

Mills Creek (17 acres) and Coles Run (13 acres) are located in the Pedlar Ranger District of the George Washington National Forest. They are both old Augusta County water supply reservoirs that were first opened to fishing in 1990.

The lakes are managed as put-and-grow lakes and are stocked annually with small brook trout. Samples collected show good populations of 10–12 inch brook trout.

There are no facilities and access by foot is about a half mile to Coles Run and 1.5 miles to Mills Creek. For more information, call the Glenwood/Pedlar Ranger District at (540) 291-2188. Access is west of Route 664 at Sherando off Forest Service Road 42.

Skidmore Lake (Switzer Dam)

Skidmore Lake is a 104-acre impoundment located off Route 33 west of Harrisonburg. The dam was built by the Soil Conservation Service for flood control and water supply, and it is now managed by the City of Harrisonburg. An access road is available off Route 33. Boats, without motors, are permitted but must be carried to the water as no ramp is provided. Fingerling brook trout have been stocked since 1976, and fishing has been permitted since 1979. Angler success has been good, with most fish in the 8–14 inch range and an occasional large brook trout of 2–3 pounds. New regulations posted in 2002 require release of all trout less than 10 inches. In addition, the lake has developed a fairly good population of largemouth bass, bluegill, and crappie. In recent years, the city has drawn more water from the lake, and it is not unusual to find the lake well below full pool in late summer and fall, which can make boat access very difficult. No camping is permitted at the lake, but primitive camping is available in the National Forest nearby.

Lake Moomaw (Alleghany/Bath Counties)

This flood control reservoir was completed in 1981 with the closing of the Gathright Dam on the Jackson River. It resulted in the formation of a 13-mile long, 2,530-acre reservoir with more than 43 miles of shoreline.

Much of the shoreline is adjacent to the 13,428-acre Gathright Wildlife Management Area, which is owned and managed by the Department. The average depth of the lake is 80 feet and flow augmentation results in a normal 5 to 15-foot draw down by late summer.

Trout management at the reservoir consists of stocking subcatchable brown trout and the Mc-

Conaughy strain of rainbow trout. Regulations were changed in 1995 to reflect the potential of this lake to produce trophy-sized trout. The creel limit was reduced to two trout per day with a minimum size limit of 16 inches.

Brown trout fishing has been good in recent years with large numbers of 3–5 pound trout reported caught. McConaughy strain rainbow trout are doing very well, also. Most trout are caught by trolling with shad imitation crankbaits; some are caught still-fishing with

©Dwight Dyke

live shad 25 feet down and others by jump fishing. Some are caught incidental to bass fishing.

The area around Moomaw provides nearly year-round opportunities for boating water sports, fishing, camping, picnicking, hiking, birding, sight-seeing, photography and hunting.

Boats are restricted to a maximum length of 25 feet. No house boats are allowed and excessive noise is prohibited. Trailer-launched boats must be launched at ramps at Fortney Branch, Bolar Flat or Coles Point. Canoes and cartops can be launched at Coles Mountain Fishing Access, McClintock Bridge, McClintock Point and Midway.

The lake is open 24 hours a day, year-round. There is a 12-inch size limit on bass. Neither a trout license nor a National Forest stamp is required.

The Bolar Mountain Recreation Area provides camping, swimming, beaches, restrooms and picnic grounds. Bolar Flat has a picnic area, a four-lane boat dock, a courtesy dock, a marina and restrooms. There are primitive camping areas at Greenwood and McClintock Point. The Morris Hill Campground and picnic area, the four-lane Fortney Branch ramp and courtesy dock, and the Coles Mountain Area are located on the south end of the lake in Alleghany County. A daily fee is charged for swimming, picnicking, camping and use of boat ramps.

For facilities information, contact the James River Ranger District in Covington (540) 962-2214; the Warm Springs Ranger District in Hot Springs (540) 839-2521 or 839-2442; or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Covington (540) 962-1138.

Special Regulations

Jackson River Tailwater (Alleghany County)

The Jackson River, below Gathright Dam, provides almost 19 miles of high quality trout fishing on a large river. The river is legally navigable and is easily floated by canoe. Six access points are available for public use, located at about 3 mile intervals. However, several landowners along the upper portion of this section of river have legally established exclusive private rights to the fishery on their properties. Anglers should be careful on where they fish this river.

Regulations on this section of river allow the use of bait and creeling of 4 trout per day over 12 inches in length. Trout populations, which had shown a significant decline after stocking was terminated, have now rebounded. An excellent wild rainbow trout fishery has developed in the upper half of this river's reach and wild brown trout are increasing in numbers as well. Trout density and average size are now above levels seen when trout were stocked annually. The fishery continues to improve.

In the following streams, special regulations require the use of single hook, artificial lures and restrict creel to fish over 12 inches in length. Trout from 6–8 inches are stocked periodically and allowed to grow for a year or two before being creeled. This approach can be used in streams that maintain good flow, cool summer waters and are productive enough for good growth of trout.

Smith Creek (Alleghany County)

The special regulation section extends from the Forest Service boundary (above the old C & O Dam) upstream 2.5 miles to the Clifton Forge Dam. Within this section, fingerling brown trout are stocked once annually. The stream contains good numbers of 8–12 inch brown trout with occasional fish to 20 inches. The stream maintains good flow throughout the year and provides wide, flat pools and good fly-fishing opportunities. The best way to access this stream is by Route 606 from Clifton Forge to the access road for the Clifton Forge Water Plant. Fishermen must park at the entrance and walk a half mile to the stream.

Snake Creek (Carroll County)

Special regulations apply to all of Big Snake Creek below Hall Ford and all of Little Snake Creek below the junction of Routes 922 and 674. The stream is located just north of Fancy Gap. Snake Creek is a moderate gradient, softwater, gravel bottomed stream with an average width of about 18 feet. The holdover of stocked brown trout is good, with some fish reaching 4 pounds. Recent sampling efforts indicate that some natural reproduction of brown trout is also occurring.

Trophy Trout Streams

In the following streams regulations restrict fishing to the use of sin-

gle hook, artificial lures and the creel is two fish per day over 16 inches (except for Mossy Creek where the creel is one fish per day over 20 inches). Mossy Creek is restricted to fly-fishing only. The management approach is to stock fingerling trout (5-6 inches) in high quality streams where they will grow exceptionally fast.

Buffalo Creek (Rockbridge County)

The special regulation area includes that section of stream from the confluence of Colliers Creek upstream 2.9 miles to the confluence of North and South Forks of Buffalo Creek. The stream flows through private land and requires a written landowner permit to fish, which is available from the Department office in Verona (please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope). Brown and rainbow trout are stocked annually as subcatchables, and good numbers of 10–16 inch fish are available. Trophy fish of 5–8 pounds have been caught in the stream. Buffalo Creek can be reached by taking Route 251 from Lexington.

Dan River (Patrick County)

The special regulation section is located within the Pinnacles Hydroelectric Project in what is known as the "Grand Canyon" of Virginia. The terrain is quite rugged and the scenery is spectacular. The section contains approximately 6 miles of stream and extends from Talbott Dam downstream to the confluence with Townes Reservoir. The fishery is maintained by natural reproduction and consists primarily of rainbow trout in the 8–12 inch size range and brown trout in the 8–18 inch size range. The upper reaches of the special regulation section can be reached by taking Route 614 south from Meadows of Dan. Turn right on Route 601 and proceed to Talbott Dam. The lower reach of the section can only be accessed by boat at the upper end of Townes Reservoir. A permit from the City of Danville is required and can be obtained at no charge from the City Utilities Department or on site at the Pinnacles Powerhouse. Contact: City of Danville, Director of Electric Division, Department of Utilities, P.O. Box 3300, Danville, VA 24543. Phone: (434) 799-5270.

Wild brook trout by Lee Walker

Jackson River (Bath County)

This section of the Jackson River is stocked several times a year with catchable-sized trout and good populations are always present. The special regulation section extends from the USFS swinging bridge (located just above the mouth of Muddy Run) upstream 3 miles to the last ford on FS 481D. This section can only be reached by foot travel, either from the Hidden Valley area or off Route 623 and FS Road 481. The area provides a remote fishing opportunity on a relatively large, productive stream. A trout license is required to fish in this stream from October 1 through June 15.

Mossy Creek (Augusta County)

The special section includes about 4 miles of stream extending upstream from the Augusta/Rockingham County line. The stream is located just off Route 42 south of Bridgewater. Fishing in Mossy Creek is restricted to fly-fishing only and a written landowner permit must be obtained (available from the Department office in Verona. You must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope). Mossy Creek is a classic, meadow, limestone stream averaging about 15 feet in width and flowing through open pastures. Brown trout in the 3–7 pound class are available to fishermen.

Pound River (Dickenson County)

This special regulation area begins at a sign posted 0.4 miles downstream of John W. Flannagan Dam and extends downstream 1.2 miles almost to the confluence with the Russell Fork River. Located within the rugged Cumberland Mountains, the scenic, tailwater fishery is dependent on coolwater discharges from Flannagan Reservoir. The Pound River immediately below the dam remains in the catchable trout program. Brown trout fingerlings are stocked in the special regulation area periodically to enhance the existing wild brown fishery. Anglers should be able to find occasional rainbow trout, as well as brown trout, up to and exceeding the 16 inch minimum size limit. This section of the Pound River can be accessed from Flannagan Dam, which is owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Roaring Run (Botetourt County)

The Roaring Run trophy trout section was established in 1999. The 1 mile section is located in the Jefferson National Forest between the third foot bridge upstream of the Roaring Run Furnace Day Use Area and the Botetourt County line. The lower section of Roaring Run (within the National Forest) remains put-and-take water. The trophy section runs through a very steep gorge that has an abundance of deep pools, which are supplied with coldwater from a large limestone spring. The trophy section continues to be developed using annual brown and rainbow fingerling stockings. Trout growth and survival to date has been good for both species of trout. Three-year classes of trout have been established in the stream and fish up to 16 inches are available for anglers. The stream can be accessed by taking Route 615 off US Route 220 west of Eagle Rock to Route 621 at Strom.

Smith River (Henry County)

The special regulation area on the Smith River extends from the mouth of Town Creek (approximately 2.5 miles below Philpott Dam) downstream to the Route 666 bridge at the upper end of the Town of Bassett. This 3-mile section of the river has a large population of wild brown trout. Fish up to 14 inches are common, but larger fish are relatively rare. The habitat in this area consists of large deep pools connected by moderately deep runs and shallow riffles. There is no direct vehicle access to this portion of the river, so you'll have to park at either end and walk into the section. Also, when power is generated at Philpott Dam, the river is too high for wading. You should call the Army Corps of Engineers (the operators of Philpott Dam) at (276) 629-2432 to get the recorded generation schedule before you go fishing.

South Fork Holston River (Smyth County)

The special regulation section is located south of Marion and west of the community of Sugar Grove off Route 16. The area was expanded in 1999 and now includes approximately 4 miles of stream extending from 500 feet above the dam at Buller Hatchery, upstream to the upper Jefferson National Forest boundary (above the crossing of the Appalachian Trail). The South Fork offers the opportunity to fish for both trophy rainbow and brown trout. An abundance of 10–14 inch trout are available.

License Requirements

All residents 16 years of age and older are required to possess a state fishing freshwater license to fish for trout. Persons who fish in designated stocked waters (those waters listed in the Trout Stocking Plan) must have an additional trout license. A National Forest Stamp is necessary when fishing in most waters within the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. Refer to your fishing regulation pamphlet for specific exemptions and costs of licenses.

When fishing in non-designated trout waters, such as wild trout streams or those special regulation areas not listed in the Trout Stocking Plan, the angler does not need a trout license. However, some of the special regulation areas require a signed landowner permit card which can be obtained from certain VDGIF offices and streamside landowners (refer to individual stream descriptions in this guide for details).

Out-of-state anglers who fish designated stocked waters need to purchase both a non-resident state freshwater fishing license (five-day, non-resident licenses are available), a non-resident trout license, and a National Forest Stamp (where appropriate.) For fishing in wild trout or most special regulation waters, the non-resident needs only a non-resident state freshwater fishing license, the appropriate National Forest Stamp and landowner permit cards.

Note: The trout license is only required from October 1 through June 15. From June 16 through September 30 anglers can fish in stocked trout waters without a trout license.

Fee-fishing areas require a state or non-resident freshwater fishing license and a daily fishing permit that can be obtained on site.

Senior citizens holding previously issued (but no longer available) $5 senior lifetime fishing licenses do not need to purchase any additional fishing or trout licenses. Virginia residents 65 years or older do not need to purchase a National Forest Stamp.

Please consult the regulation pamphlet available where you purchased your license for specific restrictions on size, creel, gear restrictions and season lengths. ☐

More Questions About Trout Fishing?

Call or write to your closest VDGIF office:

Richmond
4010 West Broad St.
P.O. Box 11104
Richmond, VA 23230-1104
(804) 367-9369

Verona
P.O. Box 996
Verona, VA 24482
(540) 248-9360

Blacksburg
2206 South Main Street
Suite C
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 951-7923

Forest
1132 Thomas Jefferson Rd.
Forest, VA 24551-9223
(434) 525-7522

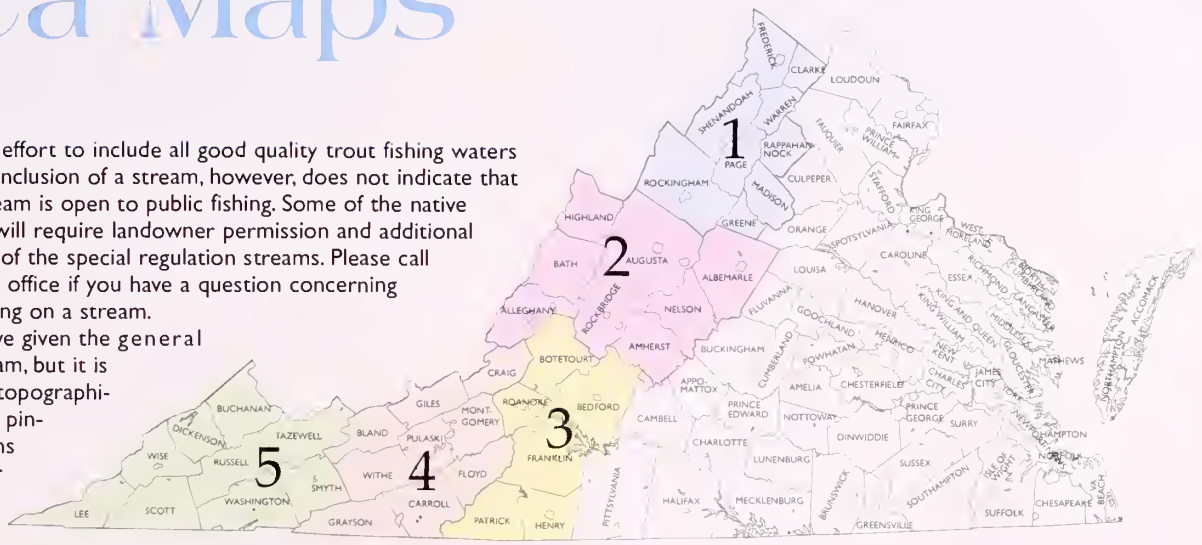
Marion
1796 Highway Sixteen
Marion, VA 24354
(276) 783-4860

Area Maps

Caution:

We have made an effort to include all good quality trout fishing waters on these area maps. Inclusion of a stream, however, does not indicate that all or part of the stream is open to public fishing. Some of the native trout streams listed will require landowner permission and additional permits as will a few of the special regulation streams. Please call your district fisheries office if you have a question concerning private vs. public fishing on a stream.

In addition, we have given the general location of each stream, but it is essential to obtain a topographical or county map to pinpoint specific locations before you start your fishing trip.



Area #1

Legend

- wild trout streams
- stocked trout waters
- special regulation waters
- (SNP) Shenandoah National Park

Frederick County
(1) Hogue Creek
(2) Clearbrook Lake
(3) Winchester Lake
(4) Paddy Run

Shenandoah County
(5) Passage Creek
(6) Little Passage Creek
(7) Peters Mill Creek
(8) Stony Creek
(9) Little Stony Creek
(10) Mill Creek
(11) Tomahawk Pond

Rockingham County
(12) N.Fk.Shenandoah River
(13) German River
(14) Slate Lick Lake/Slate Lick Run
(15) Dry River
(16) Switzer Lake
(17) Blacks Run
(18) Hone Quarry Lake
(19) Hone Quarry Run
(20) Briery Branch Lake
(21) Silver Lake
(23) Madison Run (SNP)
(24) Big Run (SNP)
(26) South River (Grottoes)

Page County
(27) Naked Creek (SNP)
(28) Cub Run
(29) Upper Passage Creek
(30) Hawksbill Creek
(31) Jeremys Run (SNP)

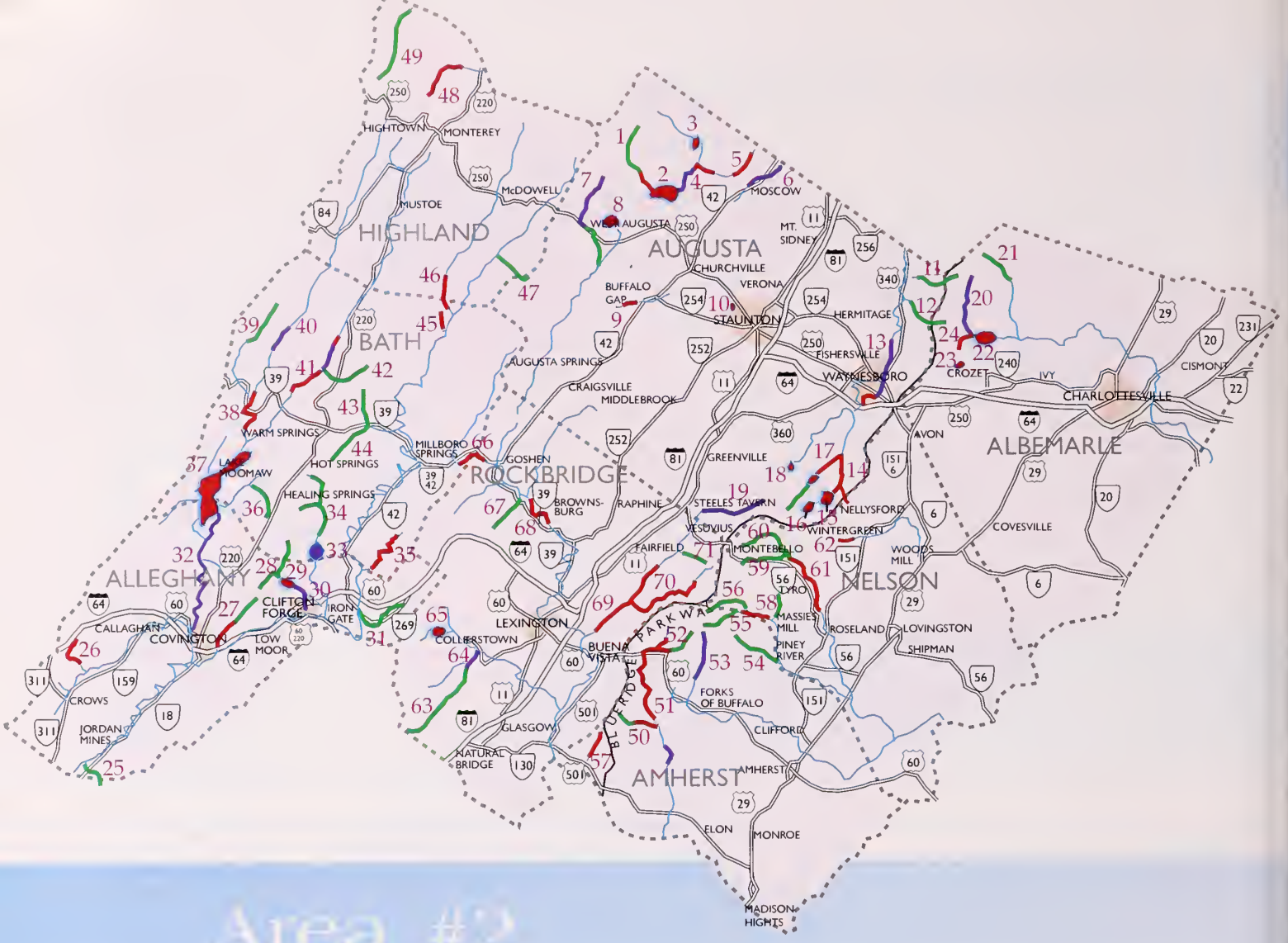
Rappahannock County
(32) Piney River (SNP)
(33) N.Fk.Thornton River (SNP)
(34) Hazel River (SNP)

Madison County
(35) Hughes Rivers (SNP)
(36) Robinson River (SNP)
(37) Rose River (SNP)
(38) Rapidan River (SNP)

Greene County
(39) Conway River
(40) South River
(41) Swift Run

Warren County
(42) Happy Creek

Fauquier County
(43) Thompson WMA Pond



Area #2

Augusta County
(1) North River (Upper)
(2) Elkhorn Lake
(3) Hearthstone Lake
(4) North River (tailwater and gorge)
(5) North River (Natural Chimney)
(6) Mossy Creek
(7) Ramseys Draft
(8) Braley Pond
(9) Falls Hollow
(10) Staunton City Lake Tams
(11) Meadow Run (SNP)
(12) Paine Run (SNP)
(13) South River
(14) Back Creek
(15) Lower Sherando Lake
(16) Upper Sherando Lake
(17) Mills Creek Reservoir/Mills Creek
(18) Coles Run Reservoir
(19) St. Marys River

Albemarle County
(20) N. Fk. Moormans River (SNP)
(21) Doyles River (SNP)
(22) Sugar Hollow Reservoir
(23) Mint Spring Lakes
(24) S. Fk. Moormans River

Alleghany County
(2S) Shawvers Run
(26) Jerrys Run
(27) Pounding Mill Creek
(28) Smith Creek
(29) Clifton Forge Reservoir
(30) Smith Creek
(31) Simpson Creek
(32) Jackson River tailwater

Bath County
(33) Douthat Lake
(34) Wilson Creek
(3S) Pads Creek
(36) Cascades Creek
(37) Lake Moomaw
(38) Back Creek
(39) Little Back Creek
(40) Back Creek
(41) Jackson River
(42) Muddy Run
(43) Jordan Run
(44) Mares Run
(45) Spring Run
(46) Bullpasture River

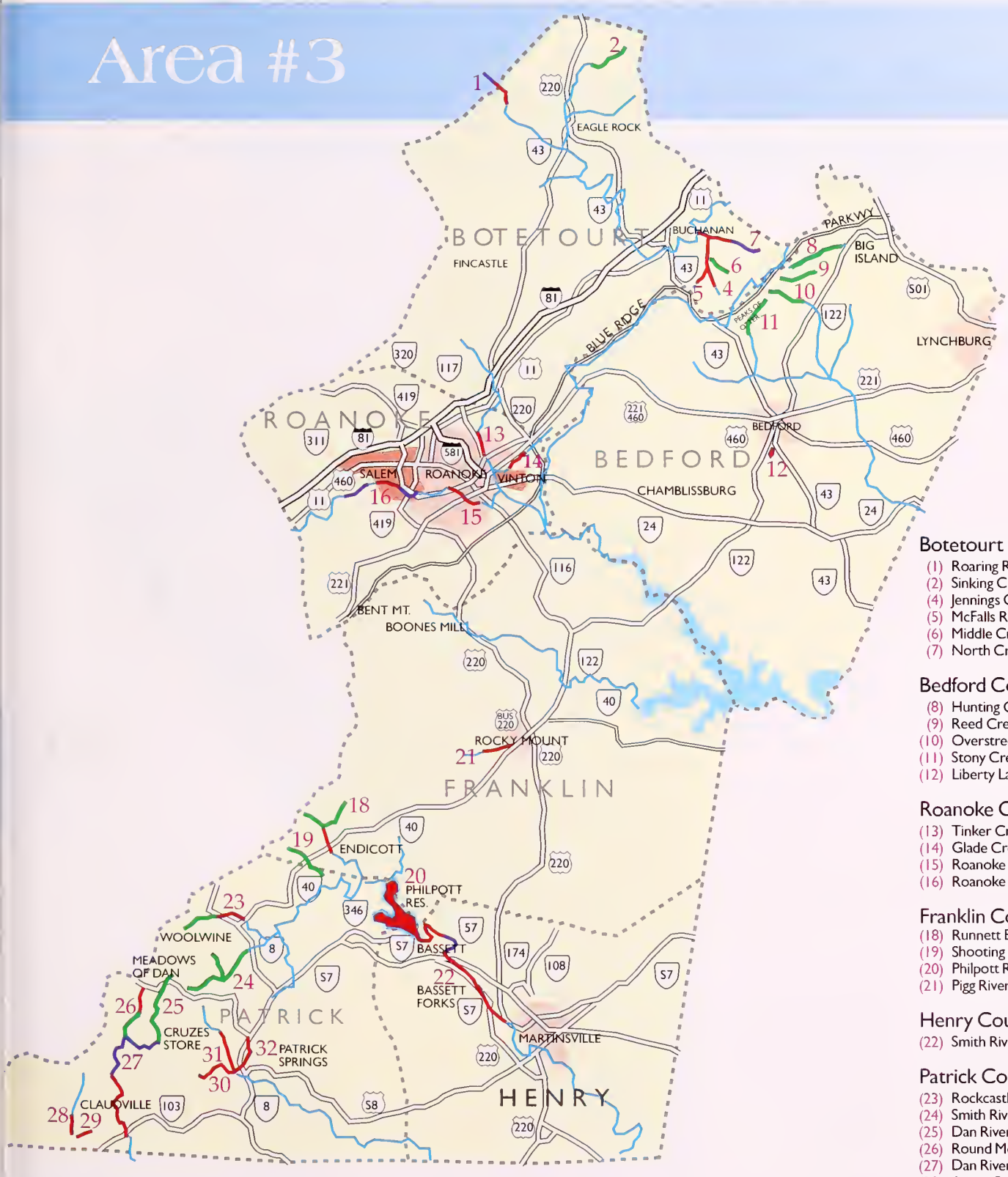
Highland County
(46) Bullpasture River
(47) Benson Run
(48) S. Br. Potomac River
(49) Laurel Fork

Amherst County
(50) Little Irish Creek
(S1) Pedlar River
(S2) Davis Mill Creek
(53) N. Fk. Buffalo River
(S4) Little Piney River
(55) S. Fk. Piney River
(S6) N. Fk. Piney River
(S7) Rocky Row Run

Nelson County
(58) Shoe Creek
(S9) S. Fk. Tye River
(60) N. Fk. Tye River
(61) Tye River
(62) South Rockfish River

Rockbridge County
(63) S. Fk. Buffalo Creek
(64) Buffalo Creek
(6S) Lexington Reservoir
(66) Mill Creek
(67) Guys Run
(68) Maury River
(69) South River
(70) Irish Creek
(71) Big Marys Creek

Area #3



Legend

- wild trout streams
- stocked trout waters
- special regulation waters
- (SNP) Shenandoah National Park

Botetourt County
(1) Roaring Run
(2) Sinking Creek
(4) Jennings Creek
(5) McFalls Run
(6) Middle Creek
(7) North Creek

Bedford County
(8) Hunting Creek
(9) Reed Creek
(10) Overstreet Creek
(11) Stony Creek
(12) Liberty Lake

Roanoke County
(13) Tinker Creek
(14) Glade Creek
(15) Roanoke River
(16) Roanoke River

Franklin County
(18) Runnett Bag Creek
(19) Shooting Creek
(20) Philpott Reservoir
(21) Pigg River

Henry County
(22) Smith River

Patrick County
(23) Rockcastle Creek
(24) Smith River
(25) Dan River
(26) Round Meadow Creek
(27) Dan River
(28) Ararat River
(29) Clarks Creek
(30) South Mayo River
(31) Poorhouse Creek
(32) N. Fk. South Mayo River

Area #4

Craig County
(1) Potts Creek
(2) N. Fk. Barbours Creek/ Barbours Creek
(3) Meadow Creek

Giles County
(5) Big Stoney Creek
(6) Little Stoney Creek
(7) Johns Creek
(8) Mill Creek
(9) Dismal Creek

Montgomery County
(10) Craig Creek
(11) Poverty Creek
(11A) Pandapas Pond
(12) Toms Creek

Floyd County
(14) Goose Creek
(15) Little River
(16) W. Fk. Little River
(17) Howell Creek
(18) Rush Fork
(19) Mira Fork
(20) Little Indian Creek
(21) Burkes Fork
(22) Laurel Fork

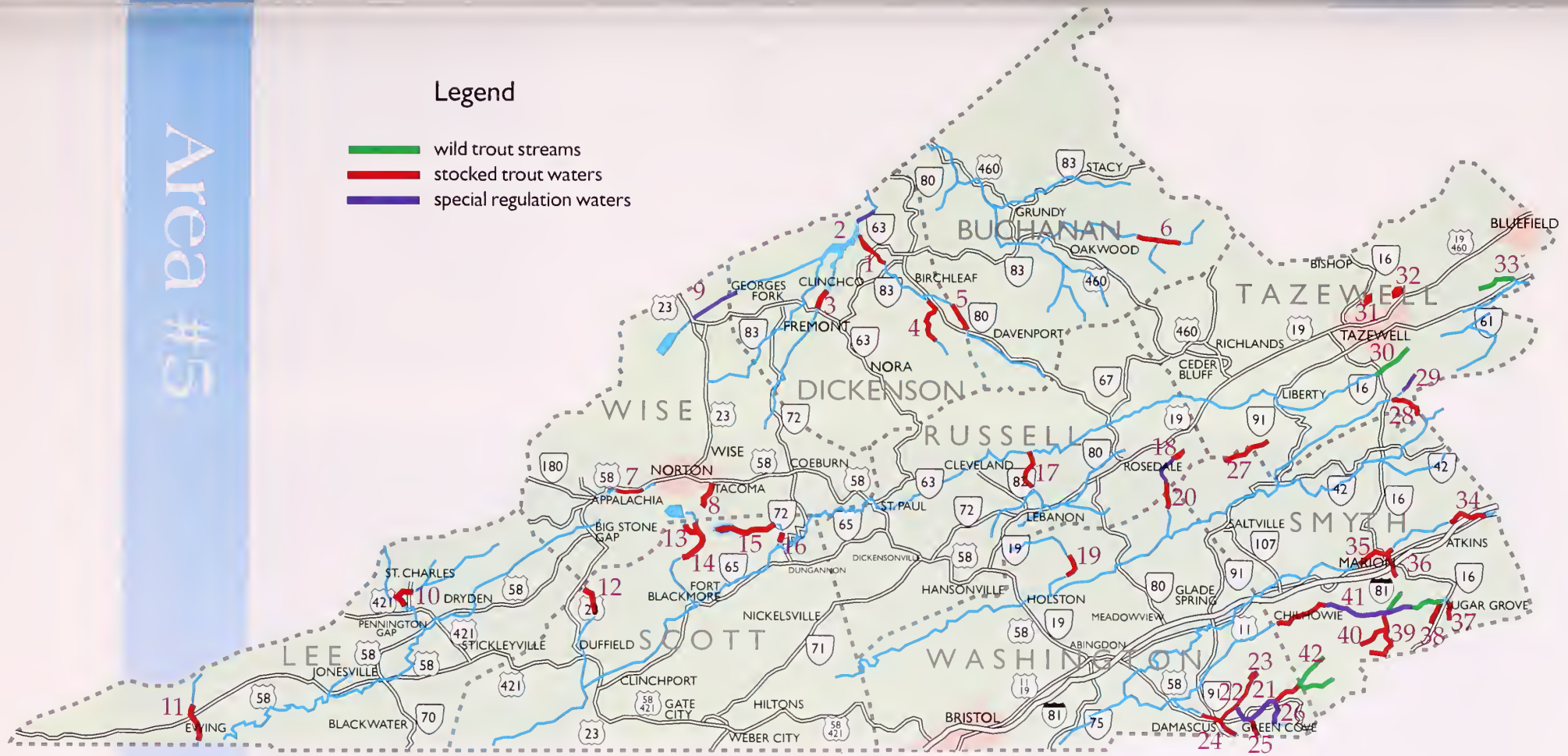
Carroll County
(22) Laurel Fork
(23) Big Reed Island Creek
(24) Snake Creek
(25) Elk Spur Branch
(26) Lovills Creek
(27) Stewarts Creek
(28) Crooked Creek
(29) Little Reed Island Creek
(30) Chestnut Creek

Pulaski County
(31) Peak Creek

Bland County
(32) Laurel Fork Creek
(33) Wolf Creek
(34) Lick Creek

Wythe County
(35) W. Fk. Reed Creek
(36) Guillon Fork Ponds
(37) Stoney Creek
(38) Dry Run
(39) Cripple Creek
(40) Rural Retreat Lake Pond

Grayson County
(41) Hales Lakes
(42) Elk Creek
(43) Middle Fox Creek
(44) Fox Creek
(45) Big Wilson Creek
(46) Helton Creek
(47) Chestnut Creek



Dickenson County
(1) Russell Fork River
(2) Pound River
(3) Cranesnest River
(4) Frying Pan Creek

Buchanan County
(S) Russell Fork River
(6) Dismal River

Wise County
(7) Middle Fork Powell River
(8) Clear Creek
(9) Pound River/ N. Fk. Pound River

Lee County
(10) N. Fk. Powell River
(11) Martins Creek

Scott County
(12) Stock Creek
(13) Straight Fork
(14) Big Stony Creek
(15) Bark Camp Lake
(16) Little Stony Creek

Russell County
(17) Big Cedar Creek
(18) Laurel Bed Lake

Washington County
(19) Big Brumley Creek
(20) Big Tumbling Creek
(21) Whitetop Laurel
(22) Straight Branch
(23) Beartree Lake
(24) Tennessee Laurel
(25) Valley Creek
(26) Green Cove Creek

Tazewell County
(27) Little Tumbling Creek
(28) Laurel Creek
(29) Roaring Fork
(30) Maiden Spring Creek
(31) Lake Witten
(32) Lincolnshire Lake
(33) Cove Creek

Smyth County
(34) Middle Fk. Holston River (Upper)
(35) Middle Fk. Holston River (Marion)
(36) Staley Creek
(37) Cressy Creek
(38) Dickey Creek
(39) Comers Creek
(40) Hurricane Creek
(41) S. Fk. Holston River
(42) Little Laurel Creek

Coldwater Conservation in the Old Dominion

©King Montgomery

Trout Unlimited– conserving, protecting and restoring North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds.

by King Montgomery

No, we don't have any salmon in Virginia anymore, but we do boast over 2,300 miles of trout streams that support healthy populations of native, wild and stocked trout. The national organization Trout Unlimited is well-represented in the Old Dominion, and that is one of the reasons our trout fisheries are in pretty good shape.

Trout Unlimited (TU) was founded 44 years ago on the banks of Michigan's Au Sable River by a small group of fishermen who believed that habitat improvement would help trout and salmon fisheries. The anglers persuaded the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to stop "put-and-take" trout stocking, and manage the resource by improving habitat so trout could take hold and become self-sustaining. Other states took note of the success of the program, and formed TU chapters across the country. And while it is not always feasible to halt stocking of trout, habitat still needs tending and improving.

TU's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North American trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. The group, headquartered in Arlington, Va, supports over 130,000 members in 440 chapters. Charles Gauvin has led TU for eight years, assisted by a small staff and a large number of member volunteers from across the nation.

The organization focuses its conservation efforts in several areas that target the following: habitat, hydropower, hatcheries and harvest. These endeavors vary from local habitat protection and improvement to lobbying at the highest level of local, state and federal government. TU uses science as its key weapon in the ongoing crusade to accomplish its worthy mission.

Since its beginning in 1959, TU has sponsored thousands of grassroots stream restoration projects on private and public lands. Countless hours are spent by volunteers on local streams and rivers planting shrubs and grasses to protect fragile banks, fencing out destructive cattle, improving water flow and stream topography and educating children about aquatic conservation. TU chapters in the Commonwealth of Virginia work closely with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and other state agencies to identify worthwhile projects to improve trout populations through stream improvement. Department personnel advise TU volunteers on how best to help streams reach a higher potential of natural productivity to support a healthy trout population.

Several examples of TU working together with the Department, other state and local agencies and landowners are reflected in the fine trout fishing available to the public on parts of Mossy Creek in Augusta County; Buffalo Creek in Rockbridge County; Accotink Creek in Fairfax County and the North River in Waynesboro. Many of our streams have been improved by TU volunteers planting trees and shrubs in the riparian zone to stabilize the banks, and placing rocks and logs to impede erosion and influence water flow. Other efforts include building or repairing landowner fences to keep cattle from fouling the waters and destroying the fragile banks.

©King Montgomery

Trout Unlimited volunteers not only work to improve our natural resources, but actively recuit new members at outdoor shows and events.

Charles Gauvin is lavish in his praise of the Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited and its army of volunteers. "TU members in Virginia are among the most vigorous and far-sighted in the nation," he says. "For more than a generation, the Virginia Council of TU has spearheaded coldwater conservation in the Commonwealth. Its 3,500 members provided the angler power to support a wide range of habitat improvement and youth education programs."

Gauvin and the Chair of the Virginia Council, John Ross from Upperville, are particularly proud of the work done by volunteers in the landmark Virginia Trout Stream Sensitivity Study in the late 1980s and in 2000 to gather data on effects of acid rain on our creeks and streams; in the "Back the Brookie" campaign to restore the only coldwater char native to the Appalachians, and the state fish of Virginia and West Virginia; in sponsoring and hosting children's trout fishing days to introduce the anglers of tomorrow to the wonders of trout and nature; and in other local, regional and state projects to support the TU mission.

Trout Unlimited chapters are also fishing organizations. Join and the members will teach you how to fish with spinning or fly gear, and take you fishing at nearby lakes, rivers or streams. Some people who don't fish are members of TU simply because they like being in the beautiful places where trout live. All members have a great respect for the outdoors and everything it offers; and they relish being with and learning from others from all walks of life who have similar views.

National Trout Unlimited is located at 1300 N. 17th Street, Suite 500, Arlington, VA 22209-3801. Contact them at 1-800-834-2419, and see their informative Web site at http://www.tu.org. Contact the Virginia Council of TU at (540) 592-7020, and visit their Web site at http://www.vctu.org

Despite all the hard work being done by TU and other grass roots conservation organizations, we can never go back to the way things used to be. But we can do the best we can with what remains, and try to improve on it as much as possible so we and our children can feel the thrill of nature, of the great outdoors and of trout. □

King Montgomery believes that conservation means the wise use of natural resources. The problem is defining "wise use." There are no easy answers, but a key to helping our stressed environment is communication and action by all concerned—citizens, landowners, businesses and government at all levels. King has a degree in fisheries biology, and is a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife.

Editor's note: *Coldwater Conservation in the Old Dominion* is the first in a series of articles that will feature conservation and outdoor organizations, and their efforts to improve our wildlife and natural resources.

Journal

Trout Fishing At Fort A.P. Hill

Fort A.P. Hill (FAPH) is a 76,000-acre Army Installation located in Caroline County, approximately 35 miles north of Richmond, Virginia and 20 miles southeast of Fredericksburg, Virginia. Two impoundments (Beaver Dam and Buzzards Roost) will be stocked with rainbow, brook and brown trout from January 8– April 30, 2005, once a week. Stocked trout will average 12 to 14 inches, with many trout stocked at trophy sizes (16 – 22 inches). Beaver Dam and Buzzards Roost are 7.6 and 10.5 acres, respectively. Both waters provide excellent fishing opportunities for bank anglers, and are also equipped with boat ramps for those anglers wanting to fish from a boat (electric motors only). Anglers fishing for trout are required to possess a valid Virginia state fishing license, FAPH fishing and trout permit (Virginia trout stamp not required). For more information about the FAPH trout-stocking program, please contact the Game Check Station at (804) 633-8244, the Natural Resources Office at (804) 633-8750, or e-mail the Installation fisheries biologist at Brian_Lee@belvoir.army.mil. Additional trout and general fishing information may be viewed on the Installation's Web site at www.aphill.army.mil. □

VOWA Youth Writing Contest

The Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc. is pleased to announce rules and guidelines for its 2004 youth writing contest. Simply go to the organization's Web site at www.vowa.org for complete details.

The youth writing contest is open to students in grades 9 through 12, and this year's theme is "What I learned about myself from a memorable outdoors experience." The organization encourages submissions from any Virginia student active in outdoors pursuits or clubs.

The deadline for all post-marked or electronically submitted entries is Friday, January 14, 2005. Prizes from sponsoring businesses will be awarded to first, second and third place winners.

Questions about the contest can be directed to Sally Mills at mills@vims.edu or during business hours at (804) 684-7167. □

2004 International Youth Hunter Education Challenge

Congratulations to the Hunter Education team members and volunteer coaches from the 4 Rivers, Little North Mountain and Bedford County for their outstanding results at the 19th International Youth Hunter Education Challenge. The event was held this past summer at the Mill Cove Environmental Area and Mansfield University in Pennsylvania. A few of the major honors from Virginia include Clyde Pangle, Little North Mountain, for placing third in the Senior Individual Overall category, the 4 River team for placing fourth overall in the nation and Canada, and to Little North Mountain coaches Bill Henry & Michael Kline who were given the F.E. "Bud" Eyman Sportsmanship Award. Virginia Hunter Education team members also placed third or better in numerous other categories during the weeklong competition.

Sponsored by The National Rifle Association of America, the International Youth Hunter Education Challenge is an opportunity for hunter education participants from the U. S. and Canada, in two age classes—junior (ages 14 and under) and senior (ages 15 to 19), to gather and compete in hunting, shooting and safety events. The International Youth Hunter Education Challenge tests skills learned by young hunters who have taken a hunter education course, graduated and competed in state or local level Youth Hunter Education Challenge programs. The best of the best are then eligible to enter and compete in the International Championship. Participants test their skill in events that include marksmanship in rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader and archery, plus wildlife identification, orienteering, hunter safety trail and a hunter responsibility exam.

For more information about The National Rifle Association International Youth Hunter Education Challenge, how to get involved, and the complete results of top scorers at the 2004 International Youth Hunter Education Challenge call (703) 267-1500 or go online at http://www.nrahq.org/hunting/youthed.asp. If you would like to know where to take a Hunter Education course in Virginia call 1-866-604-1122 or visit the Department's Web site at www.dgif.virginia.gov. □

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Left to right back row: Ray Cole, Jr., Assistant Coach; Ken Stolarski, Head Coach; Nick Heflin, Brian Heath, Ray Bessetti, Assistant Coach; front row: Brendan Utsch, Patrick Rose, and Sloan Burns of the 4 River Hunter Education team.

RECIPES

by Joan Cone

Enjoy Year-Round Trout

Everyone likes trout. As an old song went, they are "Lovely to look at, delightful to know..." and delicious to eat. These days they can be taken legally year-round. January, when most anglers are at home, is a month of opportunity on the stream and in the kitchen.

Menu
Baked Trout Fillets
Rosemary Potatoes
Green Beans And Onion Sauté
Winter Fruit Salad
Golden Raisin Polenta Cake

Bake Trout Fillets

1 pound trout fillets
1 cup sour cream
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon lemon juice
¼ teaspoon onion powder
Salt to taste
Paprika

Preheat oven to 350° F. Place fish in a greased shallow 3-quart baking dish. In a small bowl, combine sour cream, Parmesan cheese, lemon juice, onion powder and salt. Spread over fish and sprinkle with paprika. Bake, uncovered, for 20-25 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serves 3 to 4.

Rosemary Potatoes

1½ pounds baking potatoes, peeled and shredded
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary or
¼ teaspoon ground rosemary
Salt and pepper to taste

Pat potatoes dry with paper towels. Melt butter with oil in a heavy 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add potatoes to skillet and press to form cake. Sprinkle with rosemary, salt and pepper. Cook until crisp, about 6 minutes per side. Serve hot. Makes 3 to 4 servings.

Green Beans and Onion Sauté

1 small onion, cut into thin wedges
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 can (14½ ounces) cut green beans, drained
1 small tomato, cut into thin wedges
¼ teaspoon dried oregano

Cook and stir onion in hot oil in medium saucepan over medium-high heat for 4 minutes or until tender. Add beans, tomato and oregano. Heat through and transfer to serving dish. Serves 4.

Winter Fruit Salad

1 large orange, peeled and sectioned
1 medium pear, cubed
2 bananas, sliced
1 cup seedless grapes
⅓ cup walnuts, toasted

Yogurt Dressing

1 cup low fat vanilla yogurt
½ teaspoon cinnamon
⅛ teaspoon cardamon or nutmeg

In medium bowl, combine all ingredients. Add dressing and toss just before serving. Makes 4 to 5 servings.

Golden Raisin Polenta Cake

This easy, delicious recipe was on the back of the Sun-Maid Golden Raisins box.

⅔ cup butter or margarine, softened
2 ⅔ cups sifted powdered sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup flour
⅓ cup yellow cornmeal
⅔ cup golden raisins

Cream butter and sugar in large bowl until light. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Combine flour, cornmeal and raisins in a small bowl and stir into batter until well blended.

Spread batter in well-greased and floured 8 ½ x 4 ½ x 2 ½-inch loaf pan. Bake in a preheated 325° F. oven for 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1 hour and 25 minutes or until crusty on top and pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes. Loosen edges and remove from pan. Cool completely on wire rack. Makes 1 loaf cake.

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURE
Virginia's Finest

On The Water

by Jim Crosby

A Life Jacket Discussion

Of boaters surveyed, 86% oppose mandatory wearing of life jackets by adults.

Life jacket wear is still a hot topic among mariners. The Recreational Marine Research Center at Michigan State University has just completed another survey of life jacket wear.

This survey set out to discover "Boater Attitudes Regarding Requirements for Adults To Wear Life Jackets While Underway In Recreational Boats" and bears that name as its title.

We recently learned that a BoatUS Foundation study revealed the top three reasons why anglers and hunters don't wear life jackets. This latest survey supports those findings and expands them to include all boaters.

The researchers in this survey report, "there is considerable opposition to a requirement that adults wear life jackets while underway in all boats. There is substantial opposition across owners of different type and size boats. The results reveal that opposition is related more to 'individual choice' rather than concerns related to cost or wearability of PFDs (Personal Flotation Devices).

Only 12 percent of those surveyed were supportive of requiring adults wear life jackets when operating all boats.

"The vast majority (86%) of boaters who responded to the survey oppose a requirement that adult boaters wear life jackets while underway in all boats. Only 12% would support the requirement and 2% expressed no opinion.

The reason the report consistently states "in all boats" is because "62% of respondents would support a requirement that adult boaters wear life jackets while underway in certain types of boats. Almost all of them (96%) would support a requirement for personal watercraft and 77% for canoes and kayaks."

"Just 8% of the boaters who responded to the survey 'always wear' life jackets when operating their boats. Conversely, 13% indicated that they never wear life jackets."

"More canoe and kayak (12%) and sailboat (18%) owners always wear life jackets when operating their boats. Also, a higher percentage of older boaters (50 and older) always wear life jackets." Could that mean that wisdom comes with age?

Aside from the right of "individual choice," the most often cited reason for not wearing a PFD is comfort.

Many compare the wearing of a life jacket to that of wearing a seat belt. While both provide protection for the wearer, there is a vast difference between the two. Seatbelts are built into the vehicle with a one-size fits all design and are intended solely to restrain the movement of the person. Life jackets, on the other hand, are a more personal choice. They should be stylish enough for today's boater, fit correctly and provide total freedom of movement.

Whether you are the boat owner, or an occasional passenger on someone else's boat, buy a life jacket you will wear all the time.

It's a difficult task for a boat owner to have enough life jackets, of the correct size, for each and every guest they bring on board. In no other sport is one person responsible for providing all the safety equipment for each participant.

To avoid the expense of buying quality life jackets, many boat owners buy the uncomfortable, unstylish, $5.00, orange, Type II life jackets. Yes, they meet the legal requirements, but nobody would be caught dead wearing one of them, and unfortunately, that is sometimes just the case.

Today's life jackets provide comfort, freedom of movement and the design options are limitless. So wear your life jacket, because it's your life, Jack! □

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Naturally Wild

story and illustration
by Spike Knuth

Creek Chub

Semotilus atromaculatus

Virginia's streams contain a wealth of a variety of species of relatively unknown small fish, which are generally ignored by most people. Anglers are familiar with only a few of them because they are often found in the bait bucket or are occasionally caught coincidentally to targeted species. One such fish is the creek chub.

The creek chub inhabits the pools, small runs and backwaters of small streams, where sand, gravel and rock bottoms with only sparse vegetation exists. It is tolerant of turbid or silty waters and is rarely found in swamps or lakes. In Virginia it occurs from the fall line westward into the piedmont and mountain streams.

Creek chubs average about 4 to 6 inches at maturity, but can reach 12 inches in length. Its body is stocky or chubby but basically elongated. Their coloration is basically dark olive-brown to olive-green on the back with silvery sides that sometimes show a greenish-purple sheen. They have a dusky lateral stripe, which gets fainter as they grow larger. There is a dark spot at the front base of the soft-rayed dorsal fin, which is echoed in its scientific name, *Semotilus atromaculatus*; *atromaculatus* meaning "black spot."

During breeding the male has a reddish cast and has pronounced projections on its head, with smaller ones on its body or pectoral fins. In March through May, the males excavate a pit or depression in the stream bottom, and carry stones or pebbles upstream of the nest to form a mound or ridge. It does so mostly by picking them up with its mouth, but will nudge others into place with its snout. Someone looking into a stream in spring can often see the flashing of the silvery sides as they work to build. When ready, the male either allows or encourages the female into the nest to spawn.

Young creek chubs feed on zooplankton and tiny insects. Adult fish do as well, but turn to feeding on small fish after a couple years, and in about four years almost three quarters of its diet is small fish as well as larger insects, small crayfish and small mollusks. It has pharyngeal or throat teeth to help crush hard-shelled insects or mollusks.

Creek chubs are often caught and used as bait and it is not unusual for larger ones to hit the artificial flies of trout fishermen. A similar species, the fallfish, is more apt to be found in streams closer to the coast.

The smaller fish of Virginia's streams, those we refer to as shiners, minnows or chubs are a colorful and interesting family of fish that are worth learning more about. One good source of information is the book, *Freshwater Fishes of Virginia*, by Robert E, Jenkins and Noel M. Burkhead, which can be obtained through the American Fisheries Society, 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 110, Bethesda, MD 20814-2199, 301-897-8616. □

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